



LA CHINE RAPIDS

A LEGEND
OF
THE GRAND GORDONS,

EDITED BY

MRS. ALEXANDER ROSS,

Author of "VIOLET KEITH," &c.

"The night cometh wet with dew ;
Oh ! Father, let Thy light shine through."

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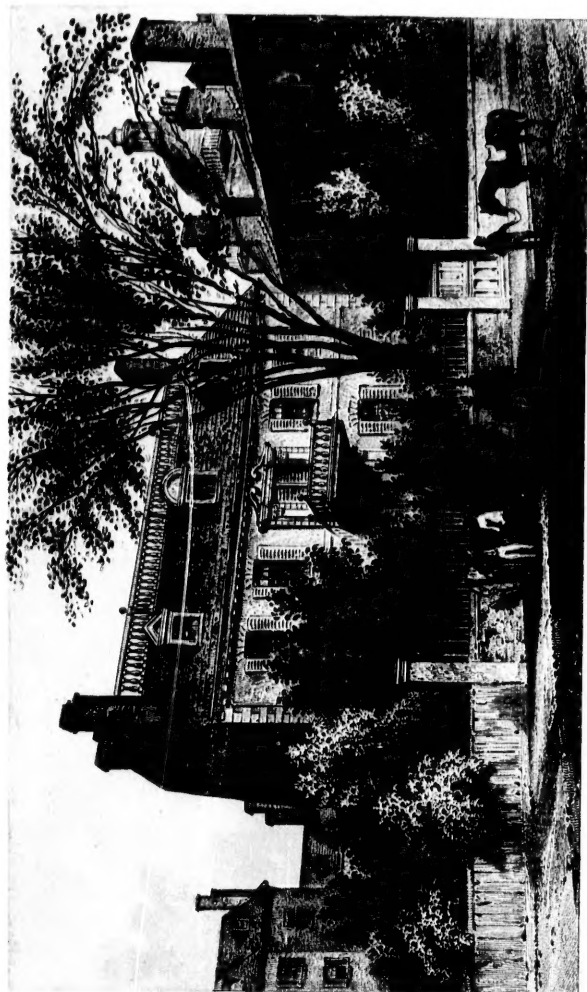
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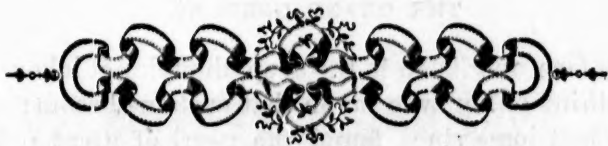
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ROCKCIRTISLE HOUSE



THE GRAND GORDONS.

CHAPTER I.

"So giveth He His beloved sleep."

THE doctor bade me open the window as wide as possible, and with noiseless steps I crossed the room and did his behest; little good did the open window do the sick woman who was passing from Time to Eternity in the curtained bed opposite.

The air was so thick and heavy that it did not stir a single leaf on the elm whose branches almost touched the window panes, and the night so black that it made me shrink and think of "that darkness which can be felt;" not a star in the heavens—not a light in the neighbours' houses—not a sound to be heard save the moaning of the sea as she dashed her billows upon the great rocks away down on the shore beneath, obeying the command, and doing the work set her by the Eternal so many thousand years ago.

I turned from the eerie sound to look on the pale

quiet face, and listen to the deep, though not laboured breathing of her who lay in that curtained room; one who had long since found the pearl of great price, one who long ago could read her title clear to the mansion the Son of God went to prepare for those who desire to dwell therein, and yet, oh mighty human love, whose spirit could not pass to the better land, held by the strong cords of love to one, who all in that quiet household but the dying mother, deemed the inmate of an Eastern grave.

A year before, when that sad letter came telling of her death, and Marion's tears fell like rain, Marion whom I never saw weep before or since, the mother laid her hand on the black-edged missive which told the sad tale, and although her troubled brow spoke of anguish too deep for tears, her unfaltering voice and firm lip first said those words so familiar now,

"Tiny is not dead,"

And the last words we heard her utter long after we thought her tongue was powerless for evermore, the deathless human love she held in her soul once more concentrating itself in speech clear and strong,

"Marion, obey my will in the spirit and the letter, Tiny is not dead, she will yet come home."

Marion and the doctor stood one on each side of the bed, the doctor no mere hired leech, but the old and tried friend of her who lay there dying.

The ticking of the great clock in the hall was distinctly heard, no other sound broke the silence,

the dying woman's eyes fixed upon a cabinet picture of her daughter, the face one of almost perfect beauty, the light seemed to stream through the pale brown curls which fell on the pictured neck, imparting to them a gleam of gold, a most bewitching smile played upon the lips, and yet in the deep grey eyes there seemed a touch of sadness, which used sometimes to make me fancy that in her far off spirit home she knew and sorrowed for the delusion of her mother.

We were startled by loud and hurried rapping at the hall door, a quick and yet heavy step on the staircase; a moment more and a young man stood in the doorway whom I at once recognized as Lady Gordon's son by his likeness to the picture bearing his name in the dining room.

He stood half inside the door glaring, (yes glaring is the only word by which I can convey my impression of his countenance while looking on his dying mother's face) evidently but half comprehending what he saw.

Marion went towards him making a motion as she did so.

"Is Mamma dead?" inquired he in a husky voice, without paying the least attention to the "hush" of Marion which was given both with voice and gesture ere he was able to make the inquiry.

Marion shook her head, the doctor turning towards him held up his forefinger, an action which the young man probably did not see as his attention was evidently drawn towards Marion, of whom he

demanded in tones a little louder than before, talking with a rapidity of utterance, and a gesture of impatience ill in accordance with the time and place.

"Why did you frighten me so by that horrible telegram? I fancied Mamma was dead."

"You were sent for by Lady Gordon's order," replied Marion in suppressed tones, endeavouring at same time to draw him from the room.

He rudely shook off the hand which she had placed on his arm and coming towards the bed, with a heavy tread, giving the doctor whom he evidently had not previously recognized a slight nod, he knelt down beside the bed and placing both his hands on his mother's arm, looked in her face, saying in an inquiring tone,

"You are better, Mamma? That telegram gave me such a fright; I have been travelling by express day and night since I received it, I was so frightened I could not eat."

He was recognized, a faint smile passed over the dying woman's face, she essayed to speak but the power of speech had passed away forever.

The boy, or rather young man rose and seated himself by the bed close to his mother's head, still keeping one of his hands on her recumbent arm, and Marion resumed her place by her dying mistress' bedside.

As she did so Lady Gordon's eye sought her's with a look of such intelligence that no words were needed

to convey its meaning to her faithful servant; Marion knelt down and clasping her hands said in a low clear voice, her lips almost close to her Ladyship's ear, as if she wished to be heard by her, and by her alone.

"I will wait all the days of my life here, till Miss Tiny comes home."

She was heard and understood, Lady Gordon's eyes again sought her daughter's pictured face, and her gaze was fixed there after her spirit had departed on its journey through the valley of the shadow; so quickly did she go on her way that it was only when the troubled look which had clouded her brow for so many long years gave place to one of perfect peace, that the doctor laid down on the white quilt the worn wrist he held in his hand for the last half hour, counting the life pulse flying, flying, and Marion and I knew she had passed away.

Marion threw her linen apron over her head and still kneeling for a few minutes indulged her grief for her who had been both friend and mistress. The doctor lifted the hand he had just laid down and addressing the dead, said

"Farewell, Lady Gordon, my tried friend in life, beloved in death. Blessed be God that He gave you His own Son as your stay in this life and your guide to the eternal shore."

The doctor left the house, Marion still continuing to kneel with covered head by the body of her mistress. I myself almost stupified with grief for the loss of the only one who had invariably treated

me justly and lovingly, the only one who had ever taken the trouble to point out to me the faulty side of my character, the way to mend these faults, and far above all else the one who taught me to go on my way rejoicing, to rest with full faith on His promise—"I have called thee by thy name;"—"I come that ye might have Life, and that ye might have it more abundantly," and together with these reminiscences came thoughts of the solemn promise I had given to the woman just now dead, the responsibility I had voluntarily taken upon myself, and I put the startling question to my soul.

"How is that promise to be fulfilled?"

I was aroused from my revery by Sir Robert walking across the room with a heavy tread. He sat down on a sofa opposite his mother's bed and covering his face with his hands, exclaimed aloud "Mama, Mama, what shall I do? Reddy, Tiny and Mamma all gone."

His words aroused Marion from her prayer or her sorrow whichever it was she indulged in, and throwing the apron from her head she stood up, not a trace to be seen of the anguish which had overspread her face for the last eight or ten hours; she was now the same firm, almost stern-looking middle aged woman she had appeared since I first saw her three years before.

"You had better go to the library, Sir Robert," said Marion, going up to where the boy still sat, "where Miss St. Clair will make tea for you." While she spoke she looked towards me as if desiring me to

do as she said I would, "this room must be put in order at once as befits the rank of your lady mother."

Thus admonished I did her bidding as I had been taught to do from the first hour I saw her; although in my capacity of companion and amanuensis I was tacitly allowed to be Marion's superior, yet I together with all others in the house paid the same deference to her commands as we paid to those of Lady Gordon.

Sir Robert sat down to the tea table, broke a piece of bread into small bits, drank a mouthful of tea, and then rising up left the house saying,

"I'll be back in an hour or two."

On his departure I ascended to Lady Gordon's room, opening the door softly as we do when the dead lie within, as if we dreaded disturbing the ear which the loudest trumpet blast ever pealed on earth would fail to move; everything in that cold room white and rigid—Marion seated close by the head of the corpse, her open Bible, above which her hands were clasped, laid on her knee, her eyes fixed where two hours before, her mistress' had been on Mrs. Percy's pictured face, the only uncovered thing in the room.

I was about to withdraw as noiselessly as I had entered, when Marion observing me, beckoned with her finger for me to approach.

"Miss St. Clair" said she in a low yet clear voice, "I know of the promise you made to her who is now in eternity, I only learnt it yesterday, would to God

she had given me your work to do instead of my own, but no doubt she judged right, they will hear you who would not hear me; may the Lord give you grace of soul and strength of body to perform what you have undertaken; and the more to strengthen you in your purpose I will tell you of a great change which has taken place in my own mind."

"You know that when Lady Gordon used to speak so confidently of Tiny's being still alive I never answered, I could not think as her Ladyship did and therefore could not answer; last night when kneeling by her bed the grace was given me to believe the truth; as surely as the bright stars are hid by that black night" as she spoke, she pointed with uplifted hand out to the darkness seen through the window I had opened several hours before, and which still remained as I had left it, the darkness intense as ever, "so surely is Miss Gordon still alive, and with the Lord's help I trust she will yet come home. Go now and rest, Annie will sit up and give Sir Robert his supper when he comes in, if he will take any, which I fear he will not; he has gone to the Baird Hills, it is a fashion of his to go there when he is in trouble."

"I will sit here with you Marion," I replied, "were I to go to bed I could not sleep; after all the excitement I have passed through I could not even lie in bed."

"You can go to the library then, and take the best of all books with you and read His word therein, but

here you cannot stay, I must wake Lady Gordon alone to-night, to-morrow the Gordons and Seatons will come to watch their dead."

I again sought the library, and sitting down on a low *fauteuil* in front of the fire endeavoured to realize to myself that the one I had attended for three years every day, almost every hour, was now lying cold and dead, and that her death had changed all my future life. Unconsciously I began in the same train of thought to hold a retrospective review of the events which had happened in Lady Gordon's family since first I entered it, ascending the door steps and knocking at the door with such a palpitating heart as I went to answer her advertisement, lest the same answer should be given as I had listened to so often, "I want one who can make dresses, one who can push her needle well."

Alas! how often and how bitterly I regretted my inability to do so, but at last I had found a home, my acquirements were just such as Lady Gordon wanted; "one who could read and write," and she added "play a little to amuse her two grandchildren." And then my salary, how my heart bounded when the gentle Lady asked me "if forty pounds would be enough?" enough! how many others had told me twenty was too much; with forty pounds I could board and clothe Ella and save money for her education, my own clothing would not cost much. Ella had never seen Mama, the sorrow of that parting at least was spared her, and now

she would never be tossed about as I had been, not if I could keep my situation, and oh I would strive so hard to do that.

My first day in the house came back as fresh as yesterday, when Lady Gordon endeavouring to make me feel at home, pointed out to me the beautiful picture of her daughter, then a girl in her eighteenth year, whose blue silk dress contrasted well with the grey old walls by which she stood, the brown pony whose neck she fondly patted, her own golden curls as bright and more beautiful than the plumage of the pheasant who tamely perched beside her on the stone balustrade of the castled home she called her own; she was mother to those two good and lovely children who made music and light in the old house at Leith when I entered it; my chief occupation there, to write every evening a diary of all that happened during the day, especially noting the sayings and doings of the twin boy and girl, that by each mail it might be sent to their young mother in her Indian home.

This used to be done by Lady Gordon herself, but a rheumatic affection of the nerves in both hands, prevented her from using her pen except in letter writing, ultimately I was entrusted with this also; I was not many weeks in the house when I knew that Captain Percy was no favourite; Lady Gordon never spoke of him. I do not know that in the first year of my residence in Leith I ever heard her mention his name; Marion was less reticent, and scrupled not at times to give utterance to her thoughts, never

in her mistress' presence, however; yet I knew well that Marion's words were but a faint echo of Lady Gordon's feelings.

Long loving letters came from India so regularly, written in that pretty round half school girl hand which seemed to sort so well with the girlish looking face in both portraits, the last although taken in her twenty-second year, just previous to her leaving her mother's home, as it would now appear, for ever, notwithstanding its grave half sad eyes, looking as girlish in face and figure as that taken in her eighteenth year. Again before I became an inmate of the old house the twin children arrived in the first year of their age accompanied by their portly French nurse Madame Peltier, who was still their attendant now that they lived at Morningside, and had taken care that her foster children learned her own language as fast as they did their mother's tongue.

Lady Gordon's bad health at last impaired her sight and for a year she was quite blind; during this time the letters from India came with only the London postmark, having been enclosed by Captain Percy to his lawyer there. These letters seemed to me less hopeful than the first I used to read for her Ladyship, and instead of the paper being full every inch as formerly, they suddenly dwindled down to a page and a-half; at last one page contained all, the style constrained and stiff, so unlike the loving letters which used to speak to her mother and children in such graphic, strong words: as I read those last

letters many a sigh did the poor blind mother give for the restoration of eye and limb promised by her physician as a reward for her patience, if she would only be patient and do his bidding for a year. Her feet as well as her hands were now almost useless, never captive in dungeon hold sighed more for freedom and light than did that mother in her spacious chamber sigh for strength to walk and power of sight; how often have I heard her say "When the Lord gives me my sight and strength again, the first use I will make of them will be to go to India and see my child." She never doubted that sight and strength would both come; and so they did, but too late to see her she loved so well.

Those constrained letters received now at long intervals instead of by each mail as formerly, seemed to me to be more a copy of Mrs. Percy's writing than her own, and I mentioned this several times to Lady Gordon, her reply was always the same.

"I dare say she probably cares little how they are written."

Time passed on and Lady Gordon received her sight and strength only to read Captain Percy's letter informing her of his wife's death, a letter written three months after that event was said to have taken place; I shall ever remember the exaggerated language it was couched in.

"My misery is complete—my despair is beyond the power of endurance—do not be surprised if you hear of my death;" many lines of such stuff, and then "I

sail with the same ship which brings you this that I may take my children to my bosom never to part with them, they are all now left to your most wretched son-in-law, Bertram Percy," and then the unique postscript "You will regret to learn that my sweet babe was carried off by the same fell disease which robbed me of my adored Margaret."

I read the letter aloud as I had done so many, and then Lady Gordon re-read it, without a tear or a sigh.

She had been earnestly warned not to overtask her new found sight, but that letter had aroused a suspicion which it seemed in her own power to allay or confirm, and all other considerations were light in comparison, were unthought of, and going to the secretary where her daughter's letters were kept, she read over every one which had been received since her failing sight obliged her to trust to my eyes instead of her own; after doing this, in the most composed manner she laid her hand upon the letters, the black-edged one the uppermost, saying with unfaltering lip and unmoistened eye "Tiny is not dead, these letters were never written by her."

Mr. Morton was then sent for, who if he did not coincide with Lady Gordon in her belief of Mrs. Percy being still alive, said nothing to the contrary. He was a dear friend of the family, and while reading the black-edged letter his face became pale as death; the other letters he was sure were never written by Tiny, as he called her; but the signature of each seemed hers, the word Tiny which was the only

signature they had, was in all the letters received for years back the same as in those of later date.

Lady Gordon would have gone to Calcutta to find her daughter whom she never for a moment classed among the dead, but Mr. Morton pointed out to her that Captain Percy would most likely arrive in the course of a day or two, as his letter implied; he should be met with guile for guile; his object in coming was most likely to make some bargain with her for the possession of the children now nearly four years of age, and whom he would probably remove to his own home wherever that was, unless convinced that they would not be brought back, no one could persuade him of this unless her Ladyship did so by deeds not words.

That very day the children were sent to board with Miss Maitland, an old friend of the family, by whom they were well cared for; next day Lady Gordon made her will, in ten days after Captain Percy arrived.

He was shewn into the sitting parlour; I was in the cabinet room between it and Lady Gordon's bedroom, busy making up accounts, and getting all things in readiness for the voyage to India (on which I was to accompany her Ladyship) when he entered, my seat placed so that I could see nearly all that happened on one side of the parlour.

From Marion's description I knew who he was immediately, short, thickset, lank fair hair, no whiskers, no beard; had I been an unprejudiced

observer which I certainly was not, I do not think the impression his appearance produced would have been at all favourable.

He went up to the cabinet picture of his wife which then hung in the little parlour; drawing up his under lip below his teeth until not a particle of it was visible, he eyed the mild face with a horrible look of silly exultation, pointing at it with his forefinger: as he turned from the picture his eye encountered my own fixed upon him in the pier glass, his face expressed anger, he knew I had seen the grimace he made. I thought of the Apostle's words "Spots and blemishes beguiling unstable souls; an heart exercised with covetous practices, cursed children, wells without water;" and I shuddered as I remembered the context "the mist of darkness."

Lady Gordon entered the parlour by passing through the room in which I sat, and bade me remain there until her visitor departed; I could not help contrasting the tall portly lady in her handsome weeds with her short homely looking son-in-law, and wondering what infatuation could have tempted her beautiful daughter to unite herself to such a man, his manners must certainly have been most fascinating to induce a beautiful girl to leave her home where she was surrounded by every luxury suited to her rank, or else we must account for it as the French do in such cases "*une mauvaise destinée*."

As Lady Gordon entered, her son-in-law approached with a sorrowful countenance, his hand extended as

if he would raise her Ladyship's to his lips ; without seeming to notice his advances she gracefully avoided any near contact with his person ; he was evidently conscious of this, but as I watched his countenance I fancied he seemed more amused than hurt by her dislike.

A pier glass placed between the windows of the parlour and reaching from floor to ceiling enabled me from where I sat in the cabinet to observe every motion of both occupants of the room, and Lady Gordon's command as she passed through left me an unseen listener.

They had scarcely passed the common compliments of greeting when he asked for his children.

"I sent them out to board when I received your black-edged letter," was her Ladyship's reply, spoken in a stately dignified way no one knew better how to assume.

He seemed completely taken aback, he had never calculated on such a proceeding, and for a second or two he made no response, becoming red and white by turns as different emotions swayed his mind ; he seemed to be thinking what to say ; at last he spoke in what he must have meant for a half conciliatory, half offended air.

"What did you mean by doing that, Lady Gordon ?"
"I meant that I do not wish to have either the trouble or expense of keeping other people's children."

If he was surprised before, the feeling was not lessened now, he replied in a less confident manner ;

"I thought you were so much attached to the children nothing could induce you to part with them."

"You are both right and wrong in your analysis of my feelings. They are sweet children and I love them dearly, but they are yours not mine, a father is undoubtedly the best person to bring up his own children."

"That is true, but your Ladyship is aware that my finances are very limited; you were accustomed during the life time of my dear departed wife," here he produced a spotlessly white pocket handkerchief with a black border, which he applied to his eyes. I thought of the pantomime I had witnessed opposite the picture. Lady Gordon's compressed lips and lowered brow expressed the contempt she felt. With a deeply audible sigh he released his imprisoned eyes and resumed his speech exactly where he left off, as if it was something he had learned by rote "to send us continual tokens of your regard, without which my dear Margaret could not have had the luxuries or the attendance I desired for her; my income is not increased, how do you think it is possible I can pay board for the children?"

"I do not think it desirable that you should; every father should have his children in his own house and under his own care" was her Ladyship's reply, uttered with a tone and look of cool indifference.

"I have no one who will care for the children now, do you think it advisable to intrust them to the charge of servants?"

"Where is the widowed sister you talked of as likely to make your house her home in case you settled in Britain after your marriage? Her presence seems to be more necessary to your welfare now than before."

He paused for a second or two and then drawled out "She—is—married."

Her Ladyship made no answer; a long pause broken by Captain Percy, saying "perhaps the best thing I can do is to follow her example. What does your Ladyship think of that?"

"I have too many affairs of my own to attend to and think of, consequently I cannot spare time to think over your future; and were it otherwise it would be highly impertinent in me to interfere in what cannot possibly concern me."

He was unprepared for this, and again at a loss for an answer; at last it came.

"Your Ladyship was not equally indifferent to my last marriage."

To his surprise doubtless, as well as mine. Lady Gordon returned no answer either by word or sign, merely leaned back in her chair and continued looking in his face, with the same haughty, cold expression she had worn on her entrance, recovering himself he added hastily "I wish I could, but no, it is impossible for me to forget, where I love I love for ever."

He sat with his body bent down over his hands, those clasped together held his black bordered pocket

handkerchief, his knees pressed close to each other while his feet extended so as to form a V, the lower and inner edge of the foot alone touching the floor. The appearance he presented seemed in my eyes to be nearer that of a swollen frog, than an officer in Her Majesty's service, married to the beautiful young original of the cabinet picture opposite; seated as he was with his head bent down he could not see the expression of contempt and scorn which played on Lady Gordon's face as she kept her gaze intently fixed on him, but without seeing her Ladyship's countenance he was evidently ill at ease, he probably realized from former experience what emotions his presence gave rise to.

Finding that his declaration of love unchangeable had not the desired effect, he sighed very audibly, and with a pathetic voice requested that Marion should be allowed to accompany him to Miss Maitland's, that he might see his children.

To this Lady Gordon gave a cold assent, and accompanied by Marion he took his departure, thus ended this most extraordinary interview.

During the drive to Morningside he expressed to Marion his surprise that Lady Gordon could bear to be parted from the children, asking her "What could be the meaning of this most unnatural conduct?"

Marion replied that he must make this inquiry of Lady Gordon; adding, "I think her Ladyship likes the children well enough, but all old people dislike the trouble and noise of children."

"Tiny made more noise with her piano and harp than it is possible those two little things can make, yet she did not tire of her. I never was more astonished in my life than when I heard they had been sent out to board; I thought Lady Gordon would have given half her income to keep them with her."

To this Marion made no reply; after a short pause Captain Percy inquired,

"Why are you not in mourning for Mrs. Percy? I thought you loved her so much that you would have mourned her all your life."

"You judged rightly there, I loved her in life and I love her in death; I love her now that she has forever passed from my sight, better than I did when she was a baby in my arms, but she was a grand Gordon, I, a mere hired servant in her Lady mother's house. In Scotland, such as I do not wear mourning for the house we serve unless desired to do so; Lady Gordon did not put any of her domestics in mourning for her daughter, the children even have not been put in mourning."

"Good Heavens! What is the meaning of that?" inquired he, "what can Lady Gordon mean by such unheard of neglect, my children not in mourning for their mother; this is absolutely monstrous."

"There has not been much time lost," was Marion's quiet response, "in a few hours a mourning warehouse will supply all their needs; you have only to leave your order"

"My order?" repeated he inquiringly, "surely Lady Gordon does not expect me to clothe the children."

"It is not for me to say what Lady Gordon's views are on this or any other subject," replied the housekeeper, "but as her Ladyship is on the eve of setting out for India, it would be impossible for her to exercise the surveillance she has hitherto done over the children, besides as she has given up her jointer house and land to Sir Robert, her circumstances are more circumscribed than formerly."

"Given up her jointer to Sir Robert!" repeated he, in accents of indignant surprise, "what can have induced her to do so? If this be the case, she has beggared herself for a blustering coarse fellow who will give her no thanks, and will make the Hall a receptacle for all the prize fighters in the country." After a pause of a second or two, he resumed in a less troubled tone, as if reassuring himself, "you must be mistaken, Lady Gordon would never have done this."

"It has been done," replied Marion, in a decided tone. "When her Ladyship received the account of her daughter's death, she at once had her will made, and gave up her jointer, so that all her affairs might be in order should her death occur before her return from India."

"Her return from India," reiterated he, as if only then comprehending what he had been twice told. "What can induce her Ladyship to go there?"

"She goes to visit her daughter's grave; did not Lady Gordon tell you it is her intention to do so?"

"Certainly not," was his reply. "If she had, I would have informed her that she goes on a fruitless errand. Mrs. Percy died in the interior, whither she fled from the scourge by which she died. It was with difficulty I succeeded in having her and her child decently interred, deep enough to save, if possible, their remains from being torn by wild beasts; since then many months have elapsed, and it is matter of doubt if I could myself now find the place, nor am I certain that I ever really saw it; when my wife died I was confined to my bed by the same fell disease which deprived me of wife and child, and had to trust to native servants what no one should have done but myself; on my recovery, I was shewn the place where they had been laid ten feet beneath the soil; it is in the jungle covered over by the rank herbage of a tropical clime. Most assuredly, I could not now find it."

When they arrived at Morningside, and were shewn the children, he took little or no notice of either. What he said and did seemed to be mere acting; his mind was evidently preoccupied, and remaining only a few minutes, he took a hurried leave, not observing or pretending not to observe Marion's question as to whether he intended taking the children with him; and departing in the carriage provided by Lady Gordon, left Marion to find her way to Leith as she best could.

On leaving Morningside, Captain Percy drove at once to Roy and Morton's, and begging a private interview of Mr. Morton, requested information as to the terms of Lady Gordon's will, at the same time informing him of the place and manner of Mrs. Percy's interment, and how futile any attempt would now be to find the exact place of sepulchre, hence how very preposterous, as well as profitless taking such a long and expensive journey as that meditated by her Ladyship, would be.

Mr. Morton agreed entirely with him as to the useless nature of the proposed journey, particularly under the circumstances, but also assuring him that although Lady Gordon had been his unfailing friend from boyhood upward, he would not take the liberty of advising her Ladyship to alter her plans, adding, "Lady Gordon has a most indomitable will, and I do not believe any argument whatever would have the effect of making a change in her plans."

Captain Percy sat for some minutes sucking his under lip (a favorite employment of his) and then growled out,

"The will, what has she done about it?"

Seeing he was not immediately answered, he added in a more gentlemanly manner which he well knew how to assume, "I understand she has given her jointer house and lands to that uncultivated colt, my dear brother-in-law; how has she left the house in Leith, and her money?"

"You must be aware," replied Mr. Morton, "that

I am not at liberty to answer your questions ; yet what I can communicate without breach of trust, I will. Lady Gordon has given over the life rent of her jointer house and lands to her son, to whom they of right belong after her demise ; the house and grounds at Leith, together with the principal part of her money, all of which is her own by right of inheritance, will most likely ultimately, the first become an alms-house, the latter endow the same."

Captain Percy's consternation seemed to have reached its climax ; he paced the office for a few minutes, and then standing in front of the lawyer, demanded in a bitter, mocking voice and manner,

" May I humbly ask what part of her charity is to be given to her grandchildren, her darling Tiny's children, what provision has been made for them ?"

The lawyer leant over his desk at which he was seated, placing himself so as to look full in Captain Percy's face as he spoke.

" I am not at liberty, as I said before, to disclose the terms of Lady Gordon's will ; but one thing I hold myself entitled to tell you, and I speak advisedly when I say that Lady Gordon would approve of my doing so ; you need not count upon ever receiving one pound of her Ladyship's money to assist you in bringing up or educating your children, the last remittance sent to Mrs Percy, which must have reached you after her death, and has not yet been acknowledged, is the last money coming from Lady Gordon you will *ever* touch."

Captain Percy stood drinking in each word the lawyer said, with breathless attention, and then putting on his hat, without word or look of adieu, strode from the office with all the importance his short, thickset person was capable of.

He was not long in presenting himself at the old house in Leith.

He was ushered into the inner drawing-room where Lady Gordon was receiving the visits of condolence of several ladies of her own rank; she acknowledged his entrance by a ceremonious stiff bow, and then continued her conversation with the former occupants of the room. I was in the outer drawing-room busily arranging some ferns which one of her Ladyship's friends had brought a few minutes previously; I fear from the time I saw Captain Percy enter the drawing-room, I spent more time in watching him than in arranging the ferns.

At first he walked about from one occasional table to another, examining books, prints and drawing portfolios, gem cabinets, coin cabinets, and all the other little objects of interest usually crowded into a drawing-room; evidently impatient and ill at ease, every now and then constrained, as it were against his will, to cast a disquieted glance at the picture in the blue dress; the light was placed in the eye of the picture in such a way as made its gaze seem to follow you wherever you went; certain artists pride themselves in this power, and I have seen the same effect produced in others since then, but in those days, I was

younger in knowledge than in years, and noted this peculiarity for the first time, almost fancying in my wonder that some supernatural means made the pictured face look down in her still beauty and follow with her quiet gaze one whom we had cause to think had "dealt deceitfully with the wife of his youth." That Captain Percy noted this peculiarity, it was but too evident, and moved about uneasily under the unconscious eye ever fixed upon him, every second or two casting a hurried glance at the picture, I fancied to see if its gaze still followed him, until one after another of the visitors departed, leaving Lady Gordon alone with her son-in-law. He at once stayed his wandering feet and sat down on a sofa placed under the picture, perhaps that he might not see it. Lady Gordon took an arm chair opposite, and seating herself with hands crossed one over the other, said as plainly as looks can speak, "Say what you wish to say." He did not keep her waiting long.

"Your Ladyship, I am told by your lawyer, intends going to India to see Tiny's grave."

"You are both right and wrong; I intend going to India to bring Tiny home."

"Your Ladyship does not consider that in a tropical climate, Tiny's body has ere this become food for worms, and consequently it would be impossible to have it moved."

"I have well considered every phase of the subject; to-morrow I leave home, when I return, I will bring Tiny with me."

"I am sorry to hear you speak thus, but it is impossible I should give my consent to disturb the remains of my wife and child; you certainly must not attempt to commit what I have ever considered an act of sacrilege; I cannot permit you to disturb their ashes."

Lady Gordon gazed upon him without a sign of emotion on her face, as she said very calmly,

"I never dreamt of asking your permission for any act of mine; when I do so, it will be time for you to give a denial; have you forgotten that you told Marion an hour since, you could not point out the grave you are now so anxious to prevent being opened?"

"Lady Gordon," replied he, absolutely trembling with excitement, "I do not hold myself responsible for the construction your servant may put upon my words; we will, therefore, pass to another subject. Mr. Morton also informed me, you have cut off your daughter's children without a shilling; do you mean by this most unnatural conduct to shew the love you professed to have for your daughter?"

"I mean to shew you that neither you nor your children, considered as your children, can ever inherit one pound of my money. I have many engagements for to-day, you must excuse me: Good morning."

Rising, as she spoke, she left the room by a side door near where she sat, leaving her visitor looking after her, with a countenance on which were depicted

hate, revenge, fear commingling, each striving for the mastery.

He continued sitting for several minutes after Lady Gordon's departure, as if uncertain what to do; at last, rising up, he turned round to the picture in front of which he sat, and looking up, shook his clenched hand as close to the quiet face as his short arm could reach. As he did so, Mr. Morton's tall, handsome figure appeared, as if by magic, close behind Captain Percy, and taking hold of his up-lifted hand, forced it down by his side, saying as he did so, "Man, man, don't let your actions tell what you would fear to put in words."

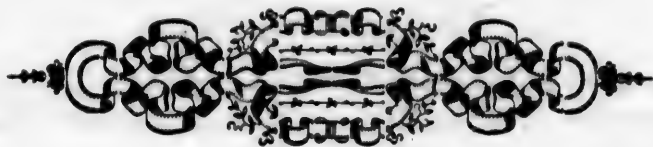
"I don't fear to put in words that I'll pay you off some day," was his reply, uttered with a fierce gesture of impatience, and spoken as he hurried from the room; in doing which he came in contact with his wife's harp, which, like everything else that had been called by her name, was kept in perfect order. Whether by accident or design, the harp was overturned, and the strings so struck gave forth a wild tumult of sound as if the harp too would breathe threatenings—against whom?

I was so astonished by what I had seen, that I never thought of getting up to lift the harp; but it was done without my help, Mr. Morton lifting it carefully as if it were a thing of life, examining the strings, and replacing the cover, which, in its fall, had been nearly dragged off; this done, he stood, for a second or two, in front of the picture, and looking

up with an expression I long remembered, said in a low voice, "Tiny, Tiny," and turning, left the room.

Well might I remember every word I heard, every action I saw that day; ere its close, a stop was put to our useless voyage in search of a nameless grave hidden in an Indian jungle; Lady Gordon, half paralyzed, was laid on a bed from which she never rose, a bed that to her, ere another year, became the bed of death.

What am I thinking of?—The bed of death?—There is no death; the stars go down to rise upon some fairer shore;—the dust we tread shall change beneath the summer rain to rainbow tinted flowers or golden fruit;—the granite rocks as they disorganize feed the green moss they bear. It is true the leaves and flowers fade and pass from our sight, but they only wait through the wintry hours, the coming of the May—an angel form walks the earth with silent tread, and his steps make our hearts desolate, and he takes from us our best loved—we look upon their pale faces and call them dead—while they—freed from sin and strife, sing the everlasting song with joyous tones, under the many coloured leaves of the tree of life—born into that undying life, they leave us but to come again, and though our eyes are holden that we may not see them, they are ever near us. All the Universe is full of life;—verily there are no dead!



CHAPTER II.

"This morn I heard the Sabbath bells
Across the breezy upland swells,—
My path lay down the woodland dells."

To-day I said the dust of creeds
The wind of words suit not my needs,
I worship with the birds, and weeds."—*Kate Seymour.*

But holier thoughts soon held their sway,
I churchward took my upward way,
I entered in God's house to pray.

It's very air was tremulous,
I felt the deep and reverend hush,
God burned before me in the bush.

NADY Gordon was now among those whom we call dead, and her house was filled from morn to night, and from night to morn again, with ladies and gentlemen of her own and her husband's name, who walked to and fro with noiseless steps, speaking with hushed voices in holy reverence for the body, she, they had so loved and honoured for her gentle, humble bearing and her high and holy thoughts, had left behind her.

Every Grand Gordon in Edinburgh and Leith was there, and all the proud Seatons, passing out and in

to the white draped chamber, and speaking in those undertones words of love and kindness to the beautiful boy and girl, whose long fair hair hanging over their black dresses reminded each there of a lovelier face than any either young or old of her race had borne—now lying in an unmarked, lonely grave far away beyond the rolling waves of the Indian Ocean.

I had nothing to employ my hands with during those days of formal mourning ; Marion looked upon these days as Sabbaths, and they were kept as such by all the household, none but the most necessary work being permitted to be done, hence employing myself with my needle was quite out of the question ; my mixing with the stately guests would have been simply craving notice from my superiors in rank, which, from my early girlhood, I had eschewed most sedulously ; and so, in all that mourning house, I was most lonely, and thrown back, as it were, on my own thoughts, I began to realize to what a life of lonely wandering I had most probably doomed myself by my most unwise, solemn vow, and I found it at first hard, and finally impossible to prevent my thoughts from forming themselves into good and valid excuses by which I might evade the performance of this fatal promise, a promise which the more I thought over it, the more wild and preposterous it seemed ; until at last, it appeared almost madness to attempt its performance.

Often during those two first weary days after her Ladyship's death, I asked myself in all soberness,

"Could Lady Gordon have been quite sane when she exacted from me such a solemn vow, binding me down to change all my future life, to leave Ella so near the time when (she well knew) we expected to be rewarded for our long separation, and live in pleasant work together—by this rash promise, turning all Ella's sweet to bitter, as well as my own—or was she, as more than one of her friends had hinted, and they those who loved her well, that on this subject she was, in truth, a monomaniac?"

The third morning came with "sunrise, silence and deep peace," the first day of the week, the blessed Sabbath morn, and I left the house in the early morning, determined that that day I would enter no church—I would seek no man's teaching—I would go into the fields and woods which God had made and seek Him there, and what the Lord would say to me, that I would do.

I was under an evil influence, and it did not then occur to me that it is written: "God loveth the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob."

I took my way through a neighbouring copse, in the direction of Edinburgh; the dew had not yet left the fair lily and slender blue hyacinth, the morning glory (most appropriate name), was still blazing forth in all its varied hues of purple and red, "the burn running under the lang yellow broom" leapt and sang, the lark rising from her dewy nest, soared towards the sun, thrilling forth her notes of praise,—the larch waved her green hair, and the beech twit-

tered her brown leaves—the solitary place was glad—glad in Him whose goodness made them all, the wild rose swung her fragrant vase, while the daisy answered from her place half hid in the green sward: “Praise Him whose ways are full of grace.”

Just at the edge of the wood where the little bridge formed of a single log crosses the burn, and divides the wood above from the wood below, I was met by Marion's father.

I was not surprised at seeing the old man there,—the cottage where he and his wife lived since they became too old to manage their farm, was close by, and I knew his habits led him early abroad; but he was evidently taken aback by seeing me emerging from the wood, more than a mile from Lady Gordon's house, so early on the Sabbath morning.

“Hoo's a' wi' ye, mem,” said the old man, touching his bonnet, “are they a' weel at the big house?”

“They are all well, Saunders,” replied I, “how are you yourself, and how is the goodwife.”

“Thank ye, mem, we're a' weel, praise be to the Lord for a' thing. It's gaun to be a bonnie day I'm thinkin, an I'm glad o't, for I'm gaen to try an gang up to Embro' the day to the kirk; it's likely that same at's taen ye out sae early in the mornin'.” As he spoke, the old man looked inquiringly up in my face, as if he expected an answer in the affirmative.

“No,” replied I, “I am not going to Edinburgh, there is no one preaching now in Edinburgh whom

I like so well to hear as our own minister in ———, and I am not to hear any one preach to-day ; I have come provided with my lunch, and I intend spending the day in the woods." I saw the look of unpleasant surprise on the old man's face, which I might have been sure this speech of mine was calculated to bring forth, and I added, as if exonerating myself from an accusation, "I can worship God as well, perhaps better, here, in this His own great Cathedral on which is never a door, and where Nature lifts up her brow and worships with me ; where the trees of the forest pray with folded palms, and each bird and insect sings psalms of a thousand notes—than in any temple made by hands."

Saunders took no notice of the last part of my speech, but answering what I had said of the Edinburgh ministers, said,

"I daresay there was naebody preaching in Embro' last Sabbath ye wad like better or get mair gude frae than our ain godly minister, but I see frae what ye sae the noo, 'at ye dinna ken 'at the Doctor's come hame."

I knew well who "the Doctor" was, but did not feel sure the information he gave could be relied on ; it seemed too good news to be true. If I was only sure of this, I would go up to Edinburgh and spend the day there, and hear what God the Lord would say to me through him who had so often been the unwitting means of delivering a message from God unto me in psalm and text, in admonition and instruc-

tion, and as this passed through my mind, I asked the old man who told him of the Doctor's return from the Continent.

"Ane 'at can be lippened till better than maist for news frae that quarter," replied he, "jist his ain servin' lass, or I should rather say ane o' his lasses; her mither bides nae far frae oor house and oor gude-wife was up there yestreen an heard the news. They're a' come hame, the Doctor an his iady an the family, an he's gaun to preach in Free St. John's the day, gin he be spared an weel, an with the Lord's help I'll gang an hear him."

While Saunders continued speaking, I sat down on a style that crossed a dry stone dyke at the edge of the wood, we having wandered a little way from the burnside. I did not answer him, being wholly occupied with the busy thoughts conjured up by the news I had heard.

The old man construing my silence, or my seating myself into a determination to remain in the woods, said, kindly laying his hand on my shoulder as he spoke,

"Gang ye awa up to Embro' lady, an hear the Doctor, an ye'll mind better what he says when ye'er far awa, than what ye think the trees or the birds either say, though nae doubt baith the tain and the tither praise Him 'at made them, their ain gett, but we canna tell what they say in their sangs or psalms, an when the day o' trial or adversity comes, as it comes to a', the words o' a godly minister like the

Doctor 'ill come back again maybe wi' mair force than they had when we sat aneath the blessing Marion tel't me yestreen 'at ye're gaun far awa to dae the erran 'at the Lord saw fit to hinder her Ladyship frae daein hersel; maybe the Doctor 'ill have a word tae say in prayer or psalm at'll lat you ken whar to gang and what to dae when ye gang, an whether or no, ye'er better in God's house than in the fule's fauld 'at Satan wad like to hae ye in, wanderin about in the woods o' the blessed Sabbath."

As the old man ceased speaking, the conviction forced itself on me that I was indeed, as he said, wandering in the fool's fold, and doing Satan's bidding, by neglecting the sanctuary on the "Sabbath of the Lord, honourable," and that I might soon be where I could hear no sound of Sabbath bells, or what I most earnestly desired, I might hear something that would be like a permission or even a command to break my illstarred vow and starting up from my seat, I said, taking the old man's hand in mine,

"I will go up to Edinburgh, and hear what God the Lord will say to me."

"To His folk, He'll speak peace, and to His Saints, but let them not return to foolishness," was his reply, as he kindly pressed my hand, in parting

I went on my way, certainly not rejoicing, as I had ever hitherto done, walking on the same road and on the same errand, namely, to hear the Doctor preach. My thoughts were concentrated on the weary wan-

dering life to which I had doomed myself by a promise made on the impulse of the moment, and asked of me in her dying moments, by one whom I had more reason to love and respect than any other woman I had ever known, and I wearied myself to find some valid reason by which I could conscientiously escape the fulfilment of my vow.

The day previous, I spoke to Marion on the subject, but the only answer I could obtain was, "If you can reconcile it to your own conscience to break the solemn vow you made before the Lord, to the dead, do so." I had all respect for Marion, for herself and her opinion in most matters; in the present instance, I considered her actuated by a narrow-minded view of the case, which she probably would not have entertained had her mind been more enlarged by education,—besides, she had evidently viewed the subject from her own standpoint, never taking into consideration the difference it would make to the poor child who had no one else in the wide world to love or care for except myself. Verily, I could have spoken, and felt as she did, were my soul in her soul's stead.

On the same day, I spoke on the same subject to Mr. Morton, and I told him all I would forfeit for myself and the nearest relative I had in the world, by going on this apparently hopeless journey, and one to which I could see no end. The promise I had made involved my non-return to my native land, until I had found Mrs. Percy alive, and could bring her home, or found her grave and had it opened.

The marks by which it could be recognized as *her* grave, and *her* body, were two rings on the third finger of her left hand, placed there on her fourteenth birthday, and which she would never allow to be taken off, until at last it was impossible to do so.

Captain Percy had assured Mr. Morton, these had been buried with her body, as amputation of the finger would have been necessary in order to remove them; and until I found the living woman, or the ringed dead hand, I was vowed to exile, and what end was such a sacrifice to serve?

Mr. Morton heard me patiently, and then said,

"As to the end your journey may serve, that is nothing to the purpose, but I by no means look upon it as hopeless. I have corresponded with Captain Percy on the subject, and he has given me as nearly as he can do, a chart of the place his wife was buried in; if it is possible to do so, it is most desirable that her body should be brought home, and he has given me his permission in writing, to have that done should we succeed in finding the grave. Were my means such as would enable me to provide for my mother and sisters in my absence, I would myself go on this errand, and in the course of a year or two, should you not succeed before then, I will, most probably, try what I can do: there is nothing in life could give me the same satisfaction as having Mrs. Percy's remains brought home to rest in her mother's grave. I could not advise you to release yourself from a promise made to the dead."

I remembered how he gazed at, and what he said to the picture in the blue dress, more than a year ago.

I would ask no more advice, miserable counsellors were they all. I was now on my way to hear the word of Him who erreth not, and I prayed so earnestly as I walked on my way, that He Himself would release me from my vow. I think it is Mrs. Hannah More who says: "Prayer draws all the Christian graces into its focus;—it draws repentance, with her holy sorrows, her pious resolutions, her self distrust, it attracts faith with her elevated eye—humility looking inward; prayer by quickening these graces in the heart warms them into life, fits them for His service; earnest prayer is mental virtue, spiritual action."

As I prayed I felt myself stronger, more willing to do the work I so dreaded; the burden I implored my Father to take from my head seemed lighter as I prayed: "He hath mercy ever." Before I reached the church door, I was able to say to Him who knew my inmost thoughts: "Lord, enable me to do Thy will with a willing mind and cheerful heart."

I had loitered long on my way; for the first time in three years, the preacher's voice fell on my ear as I entered the church; a respectably dressed, grey-haired man who had often given me a seat before, and whom I liked to fancy one of the elders, opened the door of his pew for me to enter. I looked at the speaker; yes, it was the Doctor, the man I most revered on earth, whom I had gone ten miles to

hear preach many a sunny Sabbath morning, before I ever saw Leith or Edinburgh; one who knew my heart so well by the power from on High, and yet had never heard my name, nor seen my face. I came in as quietly as possible, but the service had begun fully a quarter of an hour before, and perhaps the movement made by the man who took me into his pew, attracted the minister's attention in that crowded, silent church; he turned his head towards where I sat, and looking me full in the face, read, or I should rather say, spoke these words:

"Turn not from it *to* the right hand nor *to* the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest."

"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein, for then thou shalt have good success."

"Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed, for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

I was answered, and in all humility and faith I bowed my head and received into my heart, the message which the man of God had given me from the Lord, and I lifted up my soul to my Heavenly Father, and in the words of Israel to his servant Joshua, I also said: "Whithersoever Thou sendest me I will go."

In that hour, He answered my prayer fully, and took my burden from off my head.

The Lord is a rich provider. He not only took my burden, but in its place, He gave me light and faith, and joy unspeakable.

Almost the first words of the sermon were "That course of action which needs an excuse is never a safe one for a Christian."

I laid that sentence by among my pressed roses; it saved me frōm many a false step in all my after life.

As I took my way homewards after the second sermon, I lingered on the road that Saunders Mitchell might overtake me and bear me company on my way home. Saunders had many acquaintances in Edinburgh, and they all seemed to find a focus at St. Johns, so when I waited to have him for my companion home, which I often did, I had to exercise patience. I had not to wait so long as usual, that Sunday, the old man was putting his mettle to the proof, and on overtaking me, said, almost breathless from his exertions:

"I've been maist runnin' to win up wi' ye, and passed folk wi' a word, that was expectin' a shake o' my han'; ye've surely bein' gaun faster than ye'er ordinar?"

"No, on the contrary, I was walking slow on purpose to see you. What do you think of the doctrine the Doctor gave us to-day, do you really believe that the Lord is working miracles in answer to prayer now, as he did in the old time? We never hear of such things now?"

"That's ower true; we dinna hear o' sic things noo, but that disna mak ony difference; there's folk that prays to the Lord wi' a' their heart, and yet never watches for the answer that He aye sends; nae that He answers our prayers in the manner that we think, or expect He will, but He aye answers. God has His mysteries o' grace, but they're ower deep for human ken, and just as He fed Elijah lang ago, sae does He feed mony a puir hungry man and woman in our ain day; every ane in broad Scotland has heard how He sent a red fox to feed Jennet Morrison for ten days. That wasna done in secret; I mind the time weel, I think it was in twenty-nine, the year o' the great floods; but at ony rate, every newspaper in the country, south and north, spoke about it."

"I have heard of that, and also read an account of it more than once, it was certainly a wonderful answer to prayer," replied I, "and to a certain extent, upholds the Doctor's doctrine of to-day; but such miraculous things as ravens, or a fox either, being sent to feed human beings, do not occur more than once in many hundred years, probably not so often; these deliverances are the exception, not the rule, as the Doctor would have us believe to-day."

"He was right though, they are the rule and nae the exception," was the old man's reply, uttered in a determined voice, "but the folk o' this generation are ower wise to believe the hail gospel o' the Lord. He is saying early and late, 'They that call upon me I will hear them'—'He that feedeth the ravens'—

'Consider the lilies,'—but our folk wonna 'consider the lilies,'—they ken better themselves, they're just content to believe that He did answer prayer long ago in Egypt and in the Wilderness, and auld Jerusalem, but that He canna be troubled wi' answering prayers noo; forgetting His ain word that sae sure as 'His ear is not so heavy,' neither is His arm shortened; and they just pray on, and never watch for an answer, and whan godly men like the Doctor to whom the Lord sends His Spirit, that they may search all things, even 'the deep things of God,' tells them that He is noo as ever the Hearer and the Answerer of prayer; they think its a parable. Glory be to His name, mony a precious answer hae I had to my prayers, puir sinfu' man that I am."

"We were ance vera ill aff, lang after we left the farm, a' thing gaed against us; at last I fell poorly mysel', and for a hale simmer we had naething but Marion's penny fee, for Sandy, puir lad, he was then as he is noo, and that was the heaviest cross of all, but the Lord help'd me to lift it up, and He has strengthened me to bear it every day for aught lang years, and the puir lad nae five-and-twenty year auld yet."

(Sandy whom he alluded to, was a poor lost lad drinking every penny he could win.)

"Well, as I was sayin', we had been for the most o' the simmer livin' on Marion's hanins, and what the gudewife got for weavin' stockings to the gentry, till at length, whan I was on my feet again, Elsie fell sick and for three weeks couldna rise frae her bed, or

pit on her ain clean mutch, wi' the rheumatism, and nae a stroke o' work to be got back nor fore. Ae Friday night at supper time, I gave her a cup o' tea that was like clear water, for it was masked on Sabbath afternoon, and I aye hained it for her, and put a lit^l drap o' water tilt (I wadna hae tasted it mysel' nae n than gin it was goud), and wi' it she got the bit dry bread we were weel acquaint wi' then, and the warst o't was, that it was the last in the house, and nae meal, nae ae handfu', to mak mair wi'. Weel, whan I took the buke that nicht, I was frightened to pit up a petition for temporal mercies, for fear she wad dread that there was naething in the house; sae I did as I was wont, and as I kent his mither never thought the time lang eneuch for, I wrestled wi' the Lord lang for Sandy, puir lad, but that's a petition I ha' laid before Him in secret and in the Assembly o' folk, for mony a lang day, and I am waitin' yet for the answer. I hae whiles been lifted up to think that Satan in presenting himsel' before the Lord, as he doubtless does yet amang the sons o' God, has brought me also for a reproach, as he did lang ago to Job; and I hae faith eneuch to believe that the Lord 'ill pluck Sandy out o' Satan's hands yet, whether I live to see it or no. But I'm gaun back in my story.

"I gaed to my bed, but I couldna sleep, sae whan the sun began to glint in through the lozens o' the window, I slippit out frae the claes as quietly as I could for fear o' waukenin' Elsie: nae that I had onything to dae, or ony hopes o' wark, but jist that I was ower fu' o' care to lie, thinkin' hoo I was to tell her that

there was nae meal the day for ony o' us. Weel, I had hardly pitten on my claes, and was liftin' my sheen to tak them ben the house, for fear I would mak ower muckle din gin I pit them on at the bed side; Elsie opened her een and leukit at me, and smiled sae pleased and quiet like, jist as she used to dae mony a day forty years afore, whan I would tak her pails fu' o' water an carry them till her father's door. I was a stoot lad then, and whan I speart her frae her father, I brought her hame to a weel plenished house, and a' fu' byre and barn yard; and gin it had been ten times mair, she was well worthy o' it a'; she was the bonniest lass in a' the country side, and she ne'er gae me a back answer, or a sair heart in my prosperity, and she ne'er said that her gown or her mutch was auld in our poverty;—weel, she lookit up in my face and said,

"I'm like King David whan the host o' the Philistines was garrisoned in Bethlehem, whan he longed and said, 'Oh! that one would give me to drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, that is by the gate.'"

"An what is it ye lang for, Elsie?" I speart wi' a frightened heart."

"Weel gudeman, for what I canna get, but its only a notion, and it'll pass away—jist for a drink frae oor ain red well, down at the firwood at Beldorne."

"My heart gaud a loup for gladness whan I heard what she wanted, and I said: 'ye'll get that gudewife, afore aught o'clock.'"

"O na gudeman," says she, "its o'er far for ye to gang."

"Its nae that, Elsie, I have gaen ten miles mony a day through the frost and snaw, and worn mony a pair o' sheen after six o'clock at night, only gaun to see ye; and I surely can gang three mile to please ye on a bonny harv'st mornin'. Turn ye ye'er face to the wa', and sleep again, and I'll be back at aught o'clock, wi' ye'er drink to ye."

"She pit her han' up to my face, as she said, "weel gudeman, ye've aye taen ye'er ain gett a' ye'er life, sae gin ye'er o'er tired whan ye come hame, ye hae naebody to blame but yoursel'."

"I happit her wi' the claes, and she promised to sleep till I cam back again, sae wi' a pail in aye han', and my staff in the ither, I took the road. I wasna lang gaun to the red well; mony a sweet Sabbath mornin' I sat there and read the Lord's buke whan naebody but mysel' and the birds were stirrin'; and mony a simmer's nicht whan the wark was deen, Elsie and the bairns followed me there to drink the red water, and pu' the white gowans and the purple clover, wi' the settin' sun glistenin' out and in on them through the leaves of the brown birch, that grew o'er the well."

"It did not appear vera lang sine, and yet the bairns that whiles made o'er muckle noise then, were a' but twa sleepin' sound and quiet i' the green kirk yard, wi' the white gowans growin' aboon their heads; and the proud, happy mither that was gude to a' body,

and ne'er denied the wanderer quarters, nor stinted him wi' plenty o' meat, and drink, was noo lyin in a cot-house, wi' only a but and a ben, and nae a bit to pit in her mou'; my heart was burstin', and pittin' my bonnet on the top o' the well, I knelt down to plead my cause wi' the Lord, and what I couldna pray for in the house, I prayed for noo, even that the Lord wad send bread for Elsie, and wark for mysel', and I had mair liberty in the Lord's presence, and mair enlargement of soul afore Him on that early harv'st mornin' wi' the dew on the grass aneath my feet, and the lark singin' aboon my head, than I ever had afore or since. And noo for my answer; when I rose frae my knees, there was a crown piece amang the grass at my feet! I lifted it up and turned it over and over for fear I was mistaen;—na, there was King George the third's head on the aye side, and the quarterins on the ither; and I said unto the Lord, the ministerin' angels, and birds, and bees, and trees alane hearin' me, 'I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. He is the Lord our God; He hath remembered His covenant for ever.' I lifted my pail and put on my bonnet, and then turned to go on my way hame to buy food for the wife of my youth, and as I did so, the words came clear on my soul, 'they were tempted,'—so they were, and so might I be at that moment."

"Satan is not dead, no, nor sleeping, this may be a trial of the most cruel kind, but 'the Lord whom I serve, can deliver me from the burning fiery furnace;'

—it is not my sin to be tempted, but it is my sin if I yield to the temptation;—the Lord has promised strength and grace to overcome every trial. Satan goeth about—he is as able to work a lying wonder now as he was in Egypt of old;—maybe this was a sore temptation—but if it was, there was to set against it the Lord's word, 'Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him.'"

"I laid my pail on the well, and takin' my staff in my han', I gaed up to the house that had been my ain for mony a lang year; it was about a quarter o' a mile up the brae; but it was likely the crown belanged to some o' James Duncan's folk that bide there noo, and I wad bring it to them afore I gaed hame.

"Whan I reached the house, Mrs. Duncan hersel' was in the door, and held out her han', rale glad to see me, as she said, 'Hoo are ye the day, gudeman? It was surely Providence that sent ye here sae early i' the mornin'."

"Maybe it was, Mrs. Duncan," says I, holdin' up the crown, "Did ony o' your folk lose that?"

"Na; nane o' oor folk lost it; I haena seen a crown piece for mony a day."

"Maybe some o' your harv'st han's tint it?"

"Na, gudeman, we hav'na ony harv'st han's about the house, my gudeman has been doon wi' the fever, and all the three bairns, for aught days back, and the corn standin' ready to cut, an naebody to cut it, or to

see it deen; are ye feard to come in an speak to James?"

"Na, I am nae aye bit feard," says I, and sae I gaed in an spake to the gudeman, and the upshot o't was, that he offered me mair siller than I wad tak to engage folk to cut his corn, and o'ersee the wark mysel'; and he did mair, he sent a horse and cart for a hale month for me ilka mornin' and sent me hame at nicht. I promised till engage folk to cut the crop, and fess them out the next day; and I did it, and guided his farm for a hale month, till he was weel and could do his ain wark."

"I let him see the crown, and he said at ance, 'it disna belang to ony o' our folk, but there's vera often folk comes out frae Embro to hae a picnic at the red well; its likely been some o' them that's lost it; but I dinna think that there has been ony body out there this lang while; and I dinna ken them whan they come, sae I couldna say wha it belongs till."

"The end o' the story is, that I bought plenty for a gude breakfast to my wife afore I gaed hame, and I never found an owner for the crown, but ere three months was ower, I found one that was as sair needin' it as I was the day that I got it; and I gave it to him, and bade him give it to anither whan he could part wi' it himsel', and sae he did. Ere that month was out, I got the charge o' the house and garden I bide in noo, frae Mr. Carneigie; he was born i' the house, and he pays me weel for the keepin' it in order; I hae been in't for ten years, and am weel sure I'll never be pitten out

o't;—and gin I was the morn, the Lord is as able to help me noo, as He was yon mornin', whan I gaed out wi' sic a heavy heart, and nae ae bawbee i' the house, ten years sine."

I did not reach Leith until late in the evening; Marion was passing through the Hall as I entered, and, coming towards me, said with a pleased air:

"Oh! I am so glad you have come home; I was afraid we would never see you again."

While she was speaking, Mr Morton came from the library, and shaking hands warmly with me, said "We, Marion and I, were afraid some evil had happened to you. What kept you away so long? We knew you had no acquaintance to visit in Leith."

I replied that finding a favourite preacher had come home, and was to preach, I went up to Edinburgh to hear him; adding, "perhaps it may be the last time for many years, as I have made up my mind to go to India by the first steamer in which I can obtain a berth, after Lady Gordon's interment."

I well knew that the evil they both feared for me, was that I had left Leith in order to avoid the fulfilment of the promise they knew I had repented so bitterly;—putting such a construction on their words was not very flattering to my self esteem, but I felt assured it was so, and since the morning, I had regained my own self respect, and therefore could bear that others should give me credit for less than I deserved, and thence it was more to relieve their

minds than for aught else, I mentioned my determination to go on my errand so soon.

Before retiring to bed, I went down to Lady Gordon's room, that I might look once more on the face that even now was so dear to me, and in entering, took my way through the parlour and little cabinet room I have already referred to.

It was very late, almost twelve o'clock, and as I passed through both rooms, I observed that the ladies and gentlemen who were to sit up with her Ladyship's body, seemed all wearied out, several of them asleep—no wonder, they probably had had only a few hours rest since her death.

There was no one in the room with the dead; this was what I wished, but could have scarcely hoped for, the funeral was to take place on the morrow, and at early morn, the body would be placed in the coffin, in the sight of all her relatives; this then was the last time I could look on her face, and I had earnestly wished to do so alone. She had no shroud, merely a simple night dress; the soft lace border of her cap lying on her cheek,—her face white, as it always was, but with no rigid lines; all so unlike death, so like life that as I stood looking down upon the body, I felt my heart beat as if some great mistake had been made;—I reverently put my hand on her arm, "Yes, it is death!"

How eloquently those folded hands—that dead face spoke.—There is not a minister in the land, whatever his knowledge of, and power over the human heart,

who, in all his life long, ever preached a sermon half so solemn, half so impressive as the one preached by that silent tongue and dead face in the quiet midnight.



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CHAPTER III.

"Who hath begotten the drops of dew?
Who the good that in all things lies,
Who the primal beauty that grew
Into myriad forms in Paradise?"—*John Reade.*

SUCH a lovely morning; earth and air full of light and life, as it was that other morning, thousands of years ago, "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy;" each little dew drop as it hung on blade of grass or waving corn, suggesting the question asked so long ago in the land of Uz, "Who hath begotten the drops of dew?"—who indeed?—who can tell the tale of their birth? Such were the thoughts that arose in my mind—the words that came to my lips, as walking along in the early morn, the pleasant grassy road that leads up to Edinburgh.

My footsteps fell on the innocent looking daisy as with red lips parted, she bared her golden bosom to the sun,—while the white clover and yellow buttercup sparkled with the starry dews of Heaven, rejoicing in their gladness—the beautiful silent creatures, I could not help but share in their joy, and unite in

praising Him who hath given us this green earth in its beauty and gladness, on which, but for sin, it were happiness enough to live.

Early in the morning a letter was placed in my hands, from Miss Pierce, with whom Ella was boarded, informing me that she, accompanied by my sister, would be at Kay's Hotel, in Edinburgh, for an hour that day; they were on their way to spend the vacation with friends of Miss Pierce' residing in Melrose. In order that I might be certain of seeing my sister, it was necessary I should go at once to Edinburgh and wait their arrival at Kay's.

I almost felt relieved when I found I was not to be in the house while that grand funeral *cortège* would take place, and took my way to Edinburgh with a lighter heart, than I had known since death entered the house I called my home, although I knew I went to inflict a terrible disappointment on the one I loved the best,—But she was young, and we had not seen each other for three years, the wound in her heart would not be so deep as in my own: and my own would be sustained by the knowledge that I was doing the bidding of the Lord; He who could lead me as the blind in a path I knew not, could make the crooked places straight, and the rough places even before me; this was His own promise, I had only to plead that promise, and within the last day and night, to me—even to me, all unworthy as I was, He had given faith to do so.

On arriving at Kay's Hotel, I seated myself in the

recess of a window overlooking the street: I had brought a book with me and between reading and an occasional gaze at the passers by, not one of whom I knew, a couple of hours sped pleasantly enough away.

A lady entered the room whom, at first I scarcely noticed; she was like myself in walking costume, and I concluded from her seating herself in one of the windows, she had come on a similar errand; by and bye she came towards the window I occupied and placing a chair for herself, made some common-place observations regarding the weather, the passers by, etcetera.

She was a comely, pleasant looking young woman, well dressed and evidently in great good humour with herself and the world at large, making piquant remarks on the passers by with a sweet toned English voice and in a kindly manner, which shewed that her bark of life for the present was launched on a smooth and bright sea;—when we are happy and prosperous ourselves, provided our dispositions are at all amiable, we are inclined to view all around in *couleur de rose*.

After chatting pleasantly for some time, she got up, walked up and down the room once or twice, and finally untying her pretty pink bonnet, took it off, looked at it admiringly, replacing it in a more becoming manner by the aid of a pier glass which was placed between the windows; this being done to her satisfaction, she again seated herself as before in the recess I partly occupied.

"I am so tired of waiting idle here," said she, "I

never was in Edinburgh before and I would so much like to go round and see the place, particularly the jewellers' shops, I have seen such beautiful jewellery that was bought here ; my watch and chain were bought from a man of the name of Kirkwood here, his name is inside."

As she spoke, she shewed me her watch, a beautiful one indeed, set round with a triple row of large pearls on the back, inclosing a monogram of three letters formed of diamonds, but like all other monograms it required a key to the letters before they could be deciphered.

"You cannot find it out," said she, with a smile, seeing by my turning the watch round that I was making a vain endeavour to find out the initials, "many have tried to do so, but all have failed ; how do you like the chain ?"

The chain was like the watch, rarely beautiful, and with a woman's admiration for such things, I expressed to her my appreciation of both, adding : "I suppose this was a wedding gift."

"Not exactly," replied she, replacing her watch outside her dress, as she had before worn it, "but it was given me by my husband a short time after our marriage ; he also gave me these ear-rings and brooch."

I looked at the ornaments, as she mentioned them ; they were of filagree work, without jewels, but of chaste and beautiful workmanship, and as well as the watch bespoke a well filled purse, and refined taste in the purchaser.

"You are fortunate in having a rich as well as a generous husband, were these things chosen by yourself?"

"Oh no, they were bought long"—she checked herself, paused a moment, and then added hastily: "they were bought here; I never was in Edinburgh before." She seemed embarrassed, stood up, and looking out so that she could see a long way down the street, exclaimed impatiently, "how tiresome to have to stay here all day like a prisoner; I wish Captain Percy would come back." (The name struck me, although I knew Mr. Morton believed the Captain Percy I was interested in to be in India, and we had not heard of his being married a second time). My curiosity was excited, but carefully schooling my face, lest the interest I felt should appear, I smilingly said: "You are wearying for your young husband?"

Her face changed at once, as she replied with a bright look: "Well, I do like to have him always with me, it is natural you know; but he is such good company, every body likes him, he keeps one laughing all the time."

This description tallied well with the account Marion had often given me of Captain Percy's habit of turning everything into ridicule, a part of his character, which, from the first, prejudiced Lady Gordon against him, although it amused and attracted her young unsophisticated daughter.

She looked at my face, it probably wearing a grave

expression suitable to the thoughts that occupied my mind, and asked laughingly, if I was married.

"No," replied I, "nor had I ever a chance to be."

"I thought so," was her answer, given with a good-humoured smile, "somehow you always know an old maid. I was sure you were an old maid, whenever I saw you, not that you look very old either;" adding quickly, as if she feared having given offence, "you may be married yet."

"I do not know, I fear not," said I, looking admiringly upon her pretty face. "I am neither young nor pretty like you, and, at all events. I could not expect to marry an officer, which you have done; is your husband a young man?"

"Oh yes, young enough," replied she, "but I am not his first wife: it was to attend the funeral of his first wife's mother that brought us here; she lived in Leith, and the funeral is to-day. I'm sure I wish it was over."

"Was your husband married to Lady Gordon's daughter?" inquired I; "her interment takes place to-day, and I have heard her daughter was married to an officer; but I thought his regiment was in Madras, or some part of India?"

"Yes," said she, "it was Lady Gordon's daughter who was Captain Percy's first wife. Did you know Lady Gordon?"

"I did, but of course her Ladyship was above my rank in life, besides she was a proud, distant woman;

she was considered peculiar by many people." This I said to draw her out.

"She ought to have been peculiar enough if she was like Mrs. Percy," was her reply, "a proud upsetting thing that you could never make content; she was never done fretting herself, so she could'n't bear to see another with a pleased face, and as jealous as Lucifer. The Captain used to say she would be jealous of a she mouse."

"You knew his wife, then?"

"I think I did know her well enough, did you?"

"No," replied I, she was married and in India before I ever saw her mother; my home was in the Highlands, and I never either saw or heard of Lady Gordon or her family, until about three years ago, when I came to Leith."

"Did you live with them?" she enquired with a searching glance.

"Yes, indeed I did."

"Oh then," said she, as if I could fully understand her—"you know all the outs and ins of them, and if the old cat was like the young one, you had a sweet time of it as well as me; but I made less of it serve me. I went to her about six months before they left India, and when we went to New-York, the Captain told me he would not let me go to Canada with them, for he knew she would kill me with her ill temper. She was fit enough to do that; I may say I never had a pleasant look from her after the first three months I

was in the house ; I'm sure it was a good thing she died, for she worried the Captain's life out of him, as well as every other body's."

"So you were not with them when she died?"

"Oh no, she died in Montreal, in Canada; she had a fever in India, and after that she pretended to have pains all the time in her side, just for an excuse to be crying all the time, just to torment other people; at any rate, the Captain said she was never fit to be his wife; he could'nt abide her cankering, puling ways—he requires a thorough going woman for his wife, who'll let him take his swing; but she would'nt let him or any one else have any pleasure; and you know, I must confess he likes a game of billiards, as all them officers do; and sometimes he used to be out the most of the night, and if he had ill luck, of course he would now and then get pretty well cleaned out, and of course he wanted her to write home to her mother (who you know was as rich as a Jew), to send out some money; but no, she was as niggardly as the mother, and if he had gone down on his knees, she would never write for a pound; so of course this made mischief all the time."

"It is to be supposed it would," replied I, "but how did you come to marry him when you remained in New York, and they went to Montreal?"

"Oh, because after her death he came right back to New York; and we were married the very day after he came back."

"That was a good thing for you."

"Of course it was, but then I knew very well long before, that I would be married to him whenever she died, the wonder was she lived so long, if you had seen her after the fever, she was just like a scarecrow, skin and bone, and always crying to get home; that was what made him take her away from New York; he caught her one day telling one of the ladies who boarded in the same hotel, that she was determined to go home and remain in Scotland, until she got better."

"But she could as easily have gone home from Montreal, in Canada, as from New York."

"No, she could not, he brought her to board with a French family there, who spoke no English, and as she did not speak French, it would not be easy for her to plan that without his leave, and we knew well enough she would have done that if they had stayed in New York. But, at any rate, she died a week or two after they went to Canada, and he cared so little about her that he had't a black coat or a bit of crape on his hat when he came back."

The window at which we sat was open, and as she finished speaking she put her head outside and looked in the direction she expected to see her husband;—drawing herself back almost instantly, she exclaimed.

"Gracious! here's the Captain back already; for goodness sake don't let on that I told you a word about Mrs. Percy, he hates me to speak to strangers and if he thought I was telling you anything, he would go mad."

"Don't fear, I sha'n't speak to him at all," said I.

"Well, that's best," replied she, in a low tone, as if fearful of his hearing what she said; "I'll go and sit in one of the far windows, and don't you let on that you know me at all; don't speak to me for any sake."

"Have no fear, I shall neither speak to, nor notice you."

She gave me a good humoured nod in reply, and hurrying off to the further end of the room, seated herself in the window, with her back towards where I sat.

She had completed her arrangements just in time—not a moment too soon—when Captain Percy put his head into, rather than entered the room. Seeing her there, he came towards her; she advancing to meet him with a pleased air, expressing at the same time, her surprise and pleasure at his quick return.

He came towards her with a smiling face, and pressed her offered hand to his lips, with a courtly air, looking altogether very different from the sulky looking rude fellow he appeared when I saw him previously.

"I felt myself one too many there," said he, "those who came for the funeral, and whom I knew, were nearly as uncivil as the old witch herself used to be; so I thought I'd come and see my love, have lunch, and still return in time to hear the will, which is the only thing I am at all concerned about."

"I am very glad you came at any rate," was her reply, as they both walked towards the window, "I

was awful tired, it's horrid lonesome being here alone, it's not like being in a hotel in New York, at all."

He laughed heartily, as he replied, "No, neither the place nor the people; however, we'll be back there soon that's one good thing, and another:—Morrison, the lawyer, whom I went to see on my way back, says that it is most likely a fabrication of Morton's, the story of the Alms house; he says that every one who had an opportunity of knowing, testifies to the fondness of the old woman for the children; that in fact they seemed to be the light of her eyes. I saw them to day, the little girl is very pretty, very like Tiny, and the boy a glorious fellow—as big with his six years as I could have been when I had numbered ten."

Whether it was the mention of his dead wife's beauty in connection with the little girl, or his admiration of the children that displeased her, perhaps both, his lady's brow clouded; observing which he laughed gaily saying as he playfully patted her cheek:

"You must not be jealous, you have no need, the little cubs would not speak to, nor look at me, and if they did, do you think it likely that I would lug them about the world with me? — not the least danger of that; I have no craving to be called Papa, and far less to be called on to pay children's bills. Apropos of bills, Morrison says he is satisfied the old woman cannot have left less than five hundred a year each for the children's education and board. I know

an excellent school in England, where I can have them boarded, educated and clothed for twenty-five pounds each, so I hope to make rather a good thing of Mistress Impudence Gordon, after all."

As he ceased speaking, his companion put her face close to his ear and whispered a few words, on which they both got up and left the room, Captain Percy staring at me, or I should rather say, at my crape bonnet and veil as he passed out.

I lifted up my soul in grateful adoration to my Heavenly Father for His mercy in bringing me here; how had the information obtained so strangely changed my life of hopeless wandering in India, seeking for a grave which had never been made there, into a comparatively easy task. In a city like Montreal, inhabited entirely by French and English, governed by European laws, it would be a simple affair to find the grave of one so recently interred.—Verily the Lord is not slack concerning His promise, I had no sooner taken His yoke upon me than it was made light in a seemingly miraculous manner, had Ella not received an invitation to go with Miss Pierce (the first she had in three years,) or had I been directed to go to another Hotel, or even the hour been stated at which they were to arrive, I could not have heard what to me was of such life long importance — would I ever again doubt a Providence that careth when "a sparrow falleth to the ground?"



CHAPTER IV.

"Lo His Spirit in our need doth shew the way."

GH Ruthie!" said a clear sweet voice, I had not heard for many a long day, while a soft cheek was held up to my lips to be kissed;—the brown loving eyes and long black hair were all my own. I had known both so well in the long ago, ever since my dear mother placed her baby of a few weeks old in my arms, telling me I must be her mamma; to feed and care for her little helpless body; and, if she lived, I must teach her to keep God's commandments, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ;—that she, herself, had been called by the Lord of Life to go on a long journey, where neither Ella nor I could go until we were called as she had been, 'but,' added she, 'I will wait for my dear Ruth all the days of her mortal life, and the first words I shall ask of her when she enters those far Heavens, will be,

'What have you done with Ella?'

I did my very best. I was only twelve years old then, but I had had a praying and teaching mother, one who instructed me from my earliest years to be

a seeker after perfection ; to be ever striving to move forward, and advance up the straight and narrow way of life ; and, child as I was myself, I watched the unfolding of the bud, the opening of the flower in my baby sister, both in mind and body ;—I watched her weak baby eyes grow strong, and brown, and soft,—I watched the little pale brown down, become soft, glossy black hair, I could measure with my finger ; and as soon as she could understand what I said, I taught her as I had been taught myself,—the Sermon on the Mount, as a rule for her life ; I told her of Jesus and the great salvation ; God willed that my poor humble labours should not be vain,—the seed sown in much weakness and with many fears, produced an abundant harvest.

I had much to be thankful for in our position, my grandfather, a retired half-pay officer, could give us food and shelter, and that was all he was able to do ; his narrow income barely sufficing for the household expenses, although these were most economically conducted by a woman who had entered his house with his wife, thirty-five years before ; poor Janet would have dressed us both in cloth of gold if she could, but her wages of three pounds per annum barely sufficed to clothe herself ; while the modest sum coming half-yearly to grandpapa, required to be eked out by the most rigid economy, in order to enable him to purchase a suit of wearing clothes, a very modest amount of pocket handkerchiefs, shirts and flannels,—such a thing as his buying a better

suit never occurred during the ten years I lived in the house, nor do I believe he, himself, or Janet either thought such a purchase at all necessary.

I well remember the care with which his 'Sabbath claes,' as she called them, were brushed and folded by Janet each Monday morning, having been previously aired on the black currant bushes surrounding the back green, to give them a 'caller smell,' and then placed in the drawer kept sacred to their use, newspaper above and below, plentifully strewn with lavender leaves and flowers.

Grandpapa was styled Major Douglas, (I strongly suspect from the small sum his half-pay amounted to, his Majority must have been a brevet rank, notwithstanding Janet's favourite story of his having refused a Coloneley.) Poor old gentleman, he had his extravagances, of which Janet complained loudly; not to himself, or even in his presence, such a thing would have been simply impossible, but to myself or a stray neighbour, or the milk-woman, or her companion and favorite gossip, Miss Robertson's servant, an ancient damsel of her own age. The Major had four hats, none of which did I ever see renewed, nor did they seem to need it, they never grew older, nor did they seem to suffer from what Janet styled 'the Major's wastefulness;' the Sabbath hat he was never trusted with. it was laid out on Sunday morning after breakfast. and as carefully put aside as 'the Sabbath claes;'—the second best hat was worn on his daily visits to the town; (we lived in the suburbs,) these visits being

paid every forenoon to read the newspapers, and go to the post-office, which he did regularly each day, receiving letters five or six times a year;—the other two were, the one for the long walk he daily took towards the country, the other for the garden, yard, etcetra.

The Major's carelessness of his second best hat was a great thorn in the flesh to Janet; its proper place was on the side table in the sitting parlour, yet the Major in his forgetfulness, hung it up in the little entrance hall, day after day; often have I been a listener to the outpourings of her distress on such occasions.

"For ony sake, look at the Major's second best hat hangin' there, and the big door as wide open as gin we keepit a public, and this was the day of a Martimas market," and taking it down, she would blow off the dust with all her might, and smooth the pile with her apron, and between each fit of blowing and rubbing, bewail her own hard fate, and the careless extravagance of her master.

"Oh they officers, they're a' the same, gin it was his Sabbath hat, it wad be the same thing; ye wad think it wad be easier for himsel' to tak aff his hat i'the parlour and pit it doon on the side table, bit na, that wid'na dee wi' the Major, he's just like a ten year auld; in he steps and never steeks a door after him, bit lats a' the stour o' the street come in on the stair carpet, and the twa basses; and up gangs his gude town hat to get a share o' a' the dust that's

gaen; mony a day I hae thought it was a gracious Providence that took the mistress awa when she gaed, for forbye the death o' the bairns, (she alluded to the death of my mother and aunt, both of whom died after their mother,) she couldna stan what I have to dee ilka day I rise; the waste and destruction that gangs on in this house, naebody wad believe; that gude stair carpet that she coft hersel, nae twa years afore she deet, widna be worth a penny piece gin I didna keep it weel coverit a' the time, and the siller he gies to the beggars is past speaking about; nae content wi' a loke o' meal or a bit piece, that I aye gie mysel; I'm feard to speak aboon my breath, fan a beggar comes to the door, gin he gets wit o' them, gin he was readin' his Bible, it widna keep him frae the door; out he wad be, and his hand in his pouch i'the minnit;—and its nae them that needs it maist that he gies till, I wadna grudge a penny noo and then to the auld blind fiddler, or yet to the sailor man that has his legs aff; but there's twa, three stout auld kegs that's as able to wark as I am, comin' roun' wi' their grey cloaks ower their heads, and baskets fu' o' a' thing that they get frae glakit cuttys o' servin' lasses, for tellin' their fortins wi' the dregs o' tea that they steal out o' their mistress' press. I ca' it a great sin to gie siller to the like o' them, jest encouraging them in their ill deen, an idle set;—but the Major ill pit his hand in his pouch for them as fast as ye like. I aye try to keep the bawbees gae scarce up the stair and

pit them in till a jelly jug that's in the kitchen press and whiles when he has naething but white siller, himsel', he'll speir gin there's ony bawbees doon the stair; and gae aften I say "No Sir," whan I think that them he's gaen to gie them till doesna need them, and ye wad wonder how headstrong he is whan he likes himsel'; aye day, auld Elspit Thompson came roun', and she comes aftener than ony body's seekin' her, and nae i'the morning like ither decent folk that's forced to seek their bit, na, that wouldna serve her, its aye about dinner time, when she thinks the Major 'ill be comin' hame, I never gae her onything mysel' sin the day that she ca'd me a pockmarkit illfaurt skate; and she's no blate;—I daresay that she tell't the Major, at ony rate, she came to the door after him aye day, and chappit afore he had time to hing up his staff in the lobby; whan he saw faa it was, he speart gin I had ony bawbees down the stair? 'No Sir,' says I, and I said in low to mysel', 'nae for her,—but I'll gie her a puckle meal.' 'Never min', says he, 'I'll sair her mysel', and afore ye could say twice ane's twa, he out wi' a white saxpence, and pits it in her hand; what think ye o' that? Its my thought that a' they officers is demented whiles. And what think ye was the upshot o't, she waited till he turned his back to gang into the parlour, and me standin' wi' the door sneck in my hand, and sine she put out her tongue in my face, and gaed her wa's down the brae; gin a' the young leddies that rins after the officers kent them as weel as I dee, they wad rin frae them i'the place o' after them."

I taught Ella all I knew myself; to play a little on the piano, to read and write her own language as well as most girls do, a little geography, a little arithmetic, and I taught her to read and speak French as well as any lady in the land, as I myself had learned it in old Cannis where I was bred and born. I had a class of young ladies at times numbering four, at times six, never more, to whom I taught what I knew of my native language for the modest sum of a guinea a quarter; with this money, we were both clothed for eight years, my labours not commencing until my fourteenth year, not from want of will on my own part but from want of confidence in my powers by those around me.

These were happy days as they sped along and the remembrance of them is sweet and pleasant still.

Then the time came when I discovered that Ella would soon know all I could teach her, and I consulted our neighbour Miss Robertson, as to what was to be done, so that I might make enough of money to send Ella to a boarding school; she was about paying her yearly visit of three months to Edinburgh and offered to bring me with her, and to give her aid in finding me a situation, the reader is already acquainted with the result.

Ella had, as she expressed it, lots of things to tell me, and Miss Pierce insisted that I should hear her play, and sing, and read German, so that the allotted time for our interview was almost gone ere I could tell of my intended journey, but as it now appeared

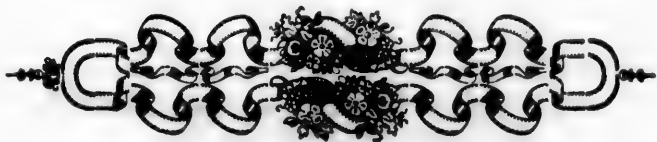
a light task in my own eyes, so it seemed in hers, and we anticipated meeting again ere the year was out in our old home, Miss Pierce offering me a situation in her school, as French teacher, saying she would also retain Ella and let her continue her studies in the higher branches, on condition she should instruct the younger pupils in what she already knew; this was a fair offer and a good opening, and was accepted conditionally; in a few minutes more, I was gazing after the railway train which was bearing Ella and her kind teacher onwards to Melrose



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CHAPTER V.

Reading the Will.

ON returning to Leith, I found the friends and relatives of the deceased were just about assembling in the dining-room, where the will was to be read; in passing up to my own room, I was met by Marion descending the staircase, who requested me to go to the dining-room with the rest, it being the desire of her Ladyship that all the members of her household should be present at the reading of her will.

I seated myself in a recess formed by the sideboard and one of the windows, so as to avoid observation as much as possible.

The gentlemen were all seated around the table. Sir Robert at the bottom, looking in his mourning as he ought to have done by right of his birth and breeding, like a gentleman; Gordon of Haight, a large, grey-haired old man, at the top; looking as he always must have done from his boyhood upwards—gentle and grand,—while among the lawyers, and opposite the relatives sat Captain Percy, those tall

proud Seatons looking at him with fierce eyes and scowling brows, as if they would fain annihilate and sweep him from their presence.

To my surprise, not Mr. Morton, but Mr. Peter Farquharson, a writer to the Signet, from Edinburgh, produced and read the will.

It was very short; the executors were Robert Morton, Gordon of Haight, and Seaton of Thurlow, on the death of one or more, the survivors to have power to appoint others.

Ten thousand pounds to Sir Robert, this to be increased to twenty thousand, in case of the return of Sir Reginald, (her Ladyship's eldest son from whom they had not heard for fifteen years.) A legacy of one hundred pounds to myself. Small legacies to each of the servants, several hundred pounds to be put out at interest to form small annuities of five pounds a year each, to poor men and women who used to be the recipients of bounty from a hand that gave freely.

The rest of her money amounting to over fifty thousand pounds, together with the house and grounds in Leith, was left to Margaret Gordon, only daughter of the deceased; the interest thereof to be paid quarterly to her own order only; the principal tied up in the most stringent manner, so that until the death of Captain Percy, it could not be touched.

In case of his demise preceding that of his wife, the money was to be wholly under her own control:

but in no case was this money to be used to liquidate any debts of Captain Percy.

Should Mrs. Percy die before her husband, small sums were to be paid to each of the children, upon their attaining the age of thirty-five years; the house and grounds at Leith to be converted into an hospital for old or sick men and women of the name of Gordon or Seaton, the money to endow the same.

Mr. Farquharson stopped reading, as if here the will ended, but not a Gordon or Seaton present moved; and from the faces of more than one, I could gather that the gist of the document was yet to come.

Captain Percy's face expressed the rage he felt; he stood up as if to retire, but seeing that no one else moved, he again seated himself.

Sir Robert seemed to take a boyish pleasure in the evident discomfiture of his worthy brother-in-law, who, it was easily seen, he hated cordially; he, on his own part, being pleasantly surprised by finding himself ten thousand pounds richer than he supposed he would have been, Gordon of Haight having told him the day succeeding Lady Gordon's death, that he did not think there was anything for him, as his mother considered she had done enough in giving over her jointer house and lands, which he had enjoyed for several years.

"Codicil," again began Mr. Farquharson, in a voice somewhat louder than he had used in his previous reading: and, after a long pause, he read the date, (one I well remembered; the day on which the letter

announcing Mrs. Percy's death was read so composedly by her mother, and yet made such a revolution in the household,) and then clearing his throat, he began—

“I make this codicil to my will, in consequence of having this day received a letter from Captain Percy, informing me of the death of my daughter Margaret; not one word of which I believe, on the contrary, I believe my child to be alive, and that she will yet claim her inheritance. And further, I believe the motive of Captain Percy in representing my daughter as dead, to be a desire on his part that I will give him a sum of money for the possession of his children, and in consequence of this my belief, I now revoke the portion of my testament anent the disposal of the money and property left to my daughter Margaret, therein.”

“I now will ten thousand pounds to be delivered over to Robert Morton, of the firm of Wood and Morton, writers to the Signet in Edinburgh, by him to be placed out at interest, and used as long as necessary for the furtherance of the scheme confided by me to him in the presence of Gordon of Haight, and Seaton of Thurlow.” (As the lawyer read the names of these gentlemen, he rested his eye for a second, on each, as if appealing to them for confirmation of what he read; which, on their part, was acknowledged by a bow of assent,) “he to be empowered to use both principal and interest thereof, of which money he is to give an account to *no one*.”

As this clause was read, Sir Robert moved uneasily in his chair ; Captain Percy rose half up, his cheeks, puffed up, and muttered something like " cheat," but was at once reproved by the cool lawyer who was reading the will, looking him full in the face over his spectacles, and Mr. Gordon of Haight who raised his hand to injoin silence.

" The whole of my money remaining after the aforesaid mentioned sums are paid, being the sum of forty thousand pounds and upwards ; I devise and bequeath to my daughter, the said Margaret Gordon, also the house and grounds now occupied by me in the suburbs of Leith, called Rockgirtisle House ; and I advise her to make said house her home, at least until after the death of Captain Percy ; during his lifetime she is to receive the interest of the aforesaid money, quarterly, to be paid into her own hand, and payable in no other way. She having no power over the principal unless she survive Captain Percy, and this money is in no case to be available for the payment of his debts."

" Until the said Margaret Gordon return to her home, the house to be kept in its present state in every way, awaiting her return, and that for the space of fifty years, Marion Mitchell to be retained as house-keeper at a salary of forty pounds per annum."

" In case of the death of said Marion Mitchell, another responsible person to be appointed by my executors, together with such a number of servants as she may deem necessary."

"Should Captain Percy refuse to take charge of his children, Leonora and Charles Percy, now living at Morningside, they are to be removed to Rockgirtisle House, in Leith, and a proper governess provided for them, until they are of age to be sent to school, they are to be educated as befitting my grandchildren; the boy to be taught any profession he may choose; they are each to be entitled to the sum of ten thousand pounds on arriving at the age of thirty-five years."

"Should their father take these children into his own charge, as is most fitting he should do, the sum of ten thousand pounds aforesaid is not to be given to them, but will be disposed of by my executors as I shall further direct."

"Fifty years from the date of my death, should my daughter, Margaret Gordon, not have returned to claim her heritage, the house in Leith is then to be converted into an Hospital for old or sick men and women of the name of Gordon or Seaton, or those descended from parents or grandparents of the names of Gordon or Seaton."

As the lawyer laid the document upon the table, I could not help thinking what a good study for an artist, the group seated around would make; Captain Percy, the most conspicuous figure in the picture. He got up more than once, pushed his chair a little back, his face pale as death,—his nostrils distended, eyes and mouth expressive of rage, and deadly hate,—then seating himself, appeared as if about to give vent to the passion he was evidently unable to con-

deal; Sir Robert, at the foot of the table, sat leaning on his arms which were folded on the table, his face turned towards his brother-in-law, absolutely gleaming with the fun he seemed to derive from the discomfiture of the other; he too had to exercise a more than usual amount of self-control in order to prevent himself giving utterance to the mirthful satisfaction the appearance and situation of Captain Percy gave rise to; every second or two, he directed his eyes to the top of the table, and seizing a moment when Gordon of Haight's eyes were bent upon a paper which Mr. Farquharson had just handed him, Sir Robert made his enemy (for such they evidently were), a mocking congratulatory bow, which in its serio-comic expression was almost irresistible, and occasioned several of those who observed it to have recourse to their pocket-handkerchiefs.

Exactly opposite to Captain Percy sat two sons of Seaton of Thurlow, large dark men, as were all their race; these gentlemen were very tall handsome men, several inches over six feet high, and so much alike in appearance that Lady Gordon, with whom they were both especial favourites, used to call them "The great twin Brethren." I had been told long since, that the elder, and heir to his father's land, was at one time an admirer of his cousin, and would most likely have been a suitor for her hand, but for the hard fate which introduced her to Captain Percy, with his wit and skill in pleasing; be this as it may, these young men sat with folded arms leaning back

in their chairs; never for one moment relaxing the steady gaze of their fierce black eyes from Captain Percy's face, of which he was evidently conscious, and winced under without the courage to return it.

At last, his passion, together with the annoyance of being stared at so unscrupulously by the two Seatons, and scoffed at by Sir Robert, became unbearable, and rising again he pushed back his chair with no gentle hand, muttered something which seemed like "I hope the old Hecate will see the revenge I shall take," and was about to leave the room when Mr. Gordon looking up from the papers he was still occupied in examining, and entirely unconscious of the fight in dumb show which had been taking place, requested Captain Percy to remain for a few minutes, adding, "it is desirable that all the business which can be arranged here shall be done at once."

Captain Percy reseated himself, and as he did so, gave a look of defiance to the two Seatons opposite; Mr. Gordon hemmed, a deprecatory hem, as if he knew he was going to say something which would be ill received, and which was forced upon him to say, will or nil, by his position.

"We are to dine here to-day, in order to give us more time to arrange all the preliminary steps to the will of the deceased being carried into effect with as little delay as possible, and in case you are pre-engaged and cannot join us at dinner, I wish to say that if it is your intention to remove your children from the care of Lady Gordon's executors, we will

be glad to have this done at once, the children are now, as you are aware, in the house, and if such is your wish, they will be delivered into your charge previous to your departure.

While Mr. Gordon spoke, Captain Percy's face assumed an almost livid hue, he struggled to appear calm, but it would not do, he trembled in every limb, as he stood up and faced Mr. Gordon, at same time, taking in with a sweep of his eye, the two young Seatons, he sputtered out rather than spoke—

“The children you speak of are Lady Gordon's grandchildren, that is certain, and as such I will have nothing to do with them; you may hang, draw and quarter them for aught I care, one shilling of my money shall never be spent to buy a biscuit for them, were they starving. Lady Gordon thought that she achieved a great success when she excluded me so effectually from any participation in the money which alone bought me to become her son-in-law; but if the spirits of the wicked see what is done on earth, I'll make her weep tears of fire and blood for that very will, in her fiery home.”

The last words had scarcely left his lips ere Sir Robert and the two young Seatons were beside him preventing his egress by the door which he was attempting to reach; Hugh Seaton seizing him by the throat and almost lifting him from the floor.

“No brawling here, loosen your hands boys,” said Gordon of Haight, in a commanding determined tone.

Sir Robert and Harry Seaton looked as if undeter-

mined whether to obey the voice they had evidently been accustomed to pay respect to, or the angry impulse of their own hearts.

Not so Hugh Seaton, who still kept his grasp of Captain Percy's throat, the latter's face almost livid purple. Meantime, Seaton of Thurlow rose from his seat, and walking leisurely up to the hostile pair, loosened his son's hands, saying as he did so—

"Na Hugh, my man, that winna dae; if ye want to kill the fox, I'll no go between ye, but unearth him from his own hole."

"That's not so easy done," replied his son, evidently very angry with the interference he had nevertheless yielded to, "you could catch an eel in the river sooner than him; I have been waiting this chance for years."

"Weel my son, ye maun e'en wait a while longer," replied his father, "and its my advice to ye whan ye fight wi' chaps of his size, to tak pistols wi' ye, or else give him a father's correction and let him go; its hardly fair for a man o' your size to go to handcuffs wi' a little chap like yon."

Ere Mr. Seaton finished speaking, Captain Percy had taken himself off, arranging the collar of his coat, which had been sadly pushed from its wonted smooth, precise folds, by Hugh Seaton, and muttering something about bringing the police, as he went out, banging the hall door twice, with violence enough to make the old house ring again.

During all that long afternoon, I in vain tried to see Mr. Morton alone, so that I might communicate to him what I had heard from Captain Percy's wife, and which I deemed might be of the utmost importance for him to know previous to their departure from Edinburgh; which the lady had assured me would be immediately after his return from the funeral.

They were seated at dinner before I could obtain access to him in any way, then I wrote a note in which I briefly stated what I had heard in Kay's Hotel, and from whom; and that I would wait, desiring the man who served table, to deliver it at once to Mr Morton

In a few minutes, he joined me in the library. I there told him all I knew, and that Mrs. Percy expected to leave Edinburgh the same day.

"I doubt that," replied he, "as I know Percy has been trying to effect a loan of money from a man in that line in Edinburgh; and I also doubt his ability to go without some such supply; however, I must at once go to Kay's, I do not think Percy has returned yet, and if not, I shall try to get a little more information from his wife."

While the sound of his voice yet lingered in my ear, he was gone.

I did not see him again until the evening, when I was sent for to meet the executors in the dining-room, where Mr. Morton was informing Mr. Gordon and Seaton of Thurlow of what I had heard from Mrs.

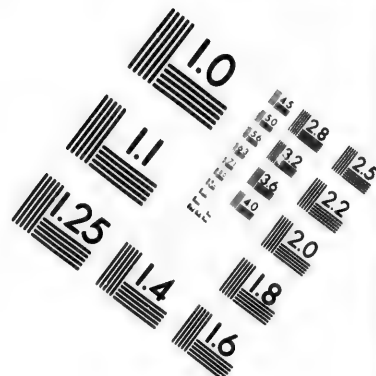
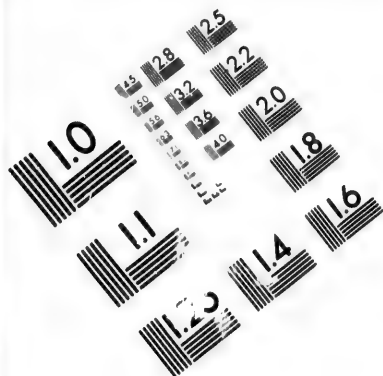
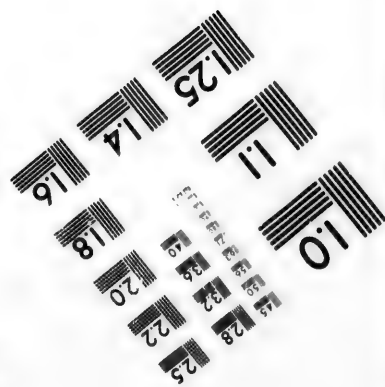
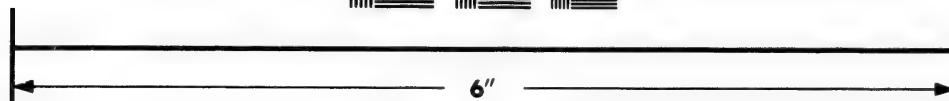
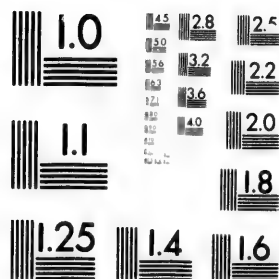
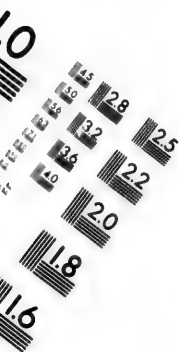


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Percy in the morning, and of his own interview with her an hour or two previous, which was effected by his sending up his card to Captain Percy, who he had ascertained was at that moment busily occupied in a Billiard Saloon with his friend Mr. Morrison.

Both gentlemen expressed their surprise and satisfaction at the discovery which had been made, Mr. Gordon saying—

“The whole of this day’s proceedings have been the Lord’s doings, and wondrous in our eyes; I have known Lady Gordon, girl, wife and widow for half a century, and all that time, I believe her to have, to the best of her ability, served the God of her fathers, and now He is answering her prayers for her children, even after she, herself, has passed from earth forever; you saw how Percy gave up the children, yea, even cast them off, while we, with less faith than she had, feared there might be much trouble to get them from him, and no little waste of money in bribing him therefor.” [I found afterwards that Lady Gordon had drawn five thousand pounds and given it in trust to these gentlemen, before her death, to be given as a bribe to induce Captain Percy to make over his children, by letters of adoption, to them, and as it was expected that on hearing of Lady Gordon’s death, he would demand a copy of her will, the mention of this was purposely omitted therein.] “And now,” continued he, “by what men call the merest accident, we find how her desire of discovering where the body of her daughter is laid, and having it brought

to her native land, can be safely and easily accomplished, instead of being what it seemed yesterday almost an impossibility."

After a pause, Mr. Gordon, addressing me, said—"I suppose you will be ready in a week or two, to proceed on your mission?"

"I am ready to go now," replied I, "and prefer doing so as soon as possible, I have nothing to detain me here, and the sooner I go, will have the less difficulty in executing what I have undertaken."

"I anticipate little trouble," replied Mr. Gordon, "in your search, if you go about it in a systematic manner. Captain Percy is a Catholic, and, no doubt, has had his wife interred according to the rites of his Church, and in a Catholic cemetery, hence your plan is to go first to one Catholic Church, and then to another, paying the usual fee to be allowed to look at the list of interments which have been registered for the three months preceding and following the time at which Captain Percy said her death took place; as he lied about the place of her death, so he may have lied about the time; it may have taken place six months or even a year previous to the time he says; it was to his advantage to conceal his wife's death as long as possible—he knew while her mother believed her to be alive, she would continue to send her usual quarterly remittance, which I fancy was pretty much all they had to depend upon, as by his own account, he sold his commission soon after his arrival in India;—his bringing her to New York and

afterwards to Montreal, entirely among French people, was most likely done with an intention of concealing her death as long as it was safe to do so."

"That is certainly the case," said Mr. Morton, "as by comparing the time of his second marriage with the date of his letter announcing the death of his wife, I find he must have been married at least six or nine months previous;—it may have been a year, as I could not, without exciting her suspicions as to my motive, question her closely enough on the subject, but as she was married previous to his coming home last year, and accompanied him as far as England, where he left her during the flying visit he paid to his children, it is too evident he concealed the death of his wife for some time after it took place."

Marion had been a silent listener to this conversation; she was standing by the sideboard when I entered, and remained there without exciting any notice, she was a privileged servant in right of her twenty-five years faithful service; she had been Mrs. Percy's teacher as well as nurse, until her seventh year, and ever held a place far above the other servants, never even eating with them;—it did not then surprise any one present, nor did they seem to consider it an intrusion when she came forward to the table where the gentlemen were seated, and still standing, (although Mr. Morton at once offered her a chair) said—

"Gentlemen, you have, perhaps, forgotten that Lady Gordon never thought of searching for Miss

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Tiny's grave until it was fully ascertained she was dead; when she intended going to India, she never once talked of searching for her daughter's grave, it was for herself she was to seek, and it was to find Miss Tiny, not her grave that Miss St. Clare promised her Ladyship; it was I in my unbelief at the time, who suggested the grave should be sought for and the body brought home, and mentioned the marks by which it could be recognized."

"And you did well, Marion," replied the old gentleman, "Lady Gordon's idea of her daughter's being in life, was a fond thing vainly imagined, she loved her so dearly she could not bear the thought of having to part with her, and by dwelling on the one idea it became so fixed in her imagination that to her it was as much a reality as if it were part of her religious belief; but to all others it was a myth, and you have within the last half hour, heard the account of her death corroborated by both Miss St. Clare and Mr. Morton, who have seen and spoken to his second wife; this woman has, no doubt, been Tiny's maid or some such person in her employment; do you think it is likely she would have become his wife unless she was certain his first wife was dead?—and that she is his wife, we have had full proof, her name is entered as Mrs. Percy, beside his in Kay's guest book, and she has been introduced to Morrison the lawyer, as his wife; she is to spend this evening at Morrison's house with his family; do you think Captain Percy would dare to introduce her in this

way if she were not his wife? Or would he dare, on the other hand, to marry her, his wife being yet alive, and thus expose himself at any moment to become the inmate of a prison? Besides, he had nothing to gain, but all to lose by Tiny's death; as long as she lived he was certain of a fair income, and if she survived her mother, her income would then be such as to make him a wealthy man; we all know he was notoriously lazy, what then could be his motive in throwing away a handsome income, together with a beautiful wife, whom, there is no question, he loved, whatever his other faults may have been; and by living a lie, to throw himself on his own resources for his daily bread?"

"But Mr. Gordon," urged Marion, who had in the fullest sense of the word, adopted Lady Gordon's idea of Mrs. Percy's being still alive, "did he not say in presence of you all to-day, that he only married Miss Tiny for her mother's money?—and did not the woman he calls his wife say that he constantly quarrelled with Mrs. Percy because she would not write to her mother for money to pay his gambling debts? Would to God, she had let that be known at home. Lady Gordon would have gone to the end of the earth to bring her to Scotland, if she had only thought she would come."

"Well, Marion, as to what Captain Percy said to-day, we know that it is false, we have never believed him to be a truthful man, and he made that speech as a sort of retaliation on the dead, because he was so

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effectually cut out from any participation in her money; Lady Gordon herself, (and as you know, there could have been no one in this world who loved him less) never accused him of marrying for money; no doubt, if he had not been sure that Lady Gordon would have given liberally to her daughter, he could not have married, as he knew what we did not then, that he had nothing of his own; but as to his marrying for money, that was a falsehood; he married a beautiful and accomplished girl, one who could have married into the best families in the land, and who was sought by several of the handsomest young men in Edinburgh—without a bawbee."

"I beg your pardon, gentlemen, for intruding my humble opinions on you who know so much better than myself, but his tiring of his wife would be just a part of his character; and what the woman in Edinburgh says is likely to be too true; he never had a dog or a horse that he cared for three months; well do I recollect his selling a pair of beautiful grays that Lady Gordon bought for their pony carriage, and getting black horses in their place, and in six weeks they were changed for fawn-coloured; it is just as likely he left Miss Tiny among the French people he took her to, in some out of the way place that she cannot get out of. Oh, Mr. Gordon, I could not face my mistress in eternity, if Tiny is not brought home; let Miss St. Clare stay and take care of the house, and let me go and search for Tiny."

"My good woman," said Mr. Gordon, who now

seemed a little irritated by her pertinacity, "you are speaking about what you know nothing of—men do not tire of their wives as they do of their horses, especially when their wives are young, and beautiful, moreover, Tiny was an heiress expectant, of forty or fifty thousand pounds; Besides, what you say of his leaving her among the French people in an out of the way place, is simply nonsense; the city of Montreal is a much larger one than Edinburgh and Leith put together, and there are full as many English people as there are French in it; if she is alive, why does she not write home? Why has she not written home for the last fifteen months?—And as to your going to Canada, in place of an educated person like Miss St. Clare, it would merely defeat the object we have in view; she speaks French, and therefore can make herself understood by both classes of the people, you could not; besides, we have no power to do this, Lady Gordon's will is most explicit; Abide by the trust reposed in you by your mistress; if Tiny is alive, it is more likely she will come home to the house in which she was bred and born than remain among strangers, and it was with a view to your keeping the house ever open for her, as well as its being a home for her children that Lady Gordon ordered it to be kept in its present state for such a length of time, and you to have charge of it as long as you live."

If Marion was not convinced, she was silent, and turning from the table, left the room.

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Mr. Morton at once entered on the arrangements for my departure, which was settled to take place the next day, when I was to leave Edinburgh for Glasgow, and thence for Montreal on the day following, by one of the mail steamers. I was provided with a sum of money sufficient for my expenses for six months, given me by a bill payable in Montreal, and I was to be furnished with letters of introduction to one or two persons there who would help me in my search.

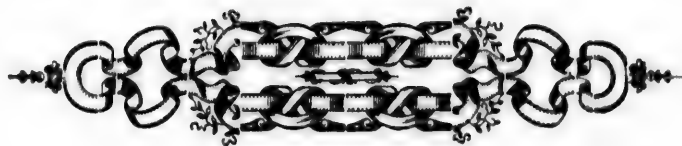
On reaching the first landing on my way to my own apartment, I involuntarily opened the door of Lady Gordon's room, where for a year past, I had been accustomed to enter twenty times a day, always the first place in the morning, always the last place at night. I had only half opened the door, the lock was still in my hand, when I was recalled to the painful sense of the present, which had for a moment been forgotten, (as we will forget all things, even the sorrow which is to wrap us as a shroud for all our lives long), by seeing Hugh Seaton standing in front of the *escritoire*, his head laid on his hand as he leant his elbow on the top of the secretary, which his great height enabled him to do with ease; Mrs. Percy's picture had been removed from the opposite wall, and was placed on top of the *escritoire*; his back was towards me, yet it was not necessary to read his countenance to know that it was the fair face before him which formed the attraction to that lonely room.

As I looked at his handsome figure, its size reduced

by his black dress, his finely shaped head—the portrait of the beautiful girl—and thought for a moment of the loveliness of soul unfolded in those long beautifully worded letters so replete with love and grace—and again of the brave soldier now gazing on her pictured face, who, while yet almost a boy, achieved acts of the most heroic daring in the Indian Rebellion, whose sword in the battle fell sharpest and quickest, one whose hand was open as his heart, and whose voice, now that he had taken his place in the great senate of the land, rose loudest and strongest for the poor man's right; when I thought of all that was—and of what might have been, the words of the learned Frenchman came as if from Holy Writ. 'She was of this world, where the things most beautiful have always the worst destiny.'



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CHAPTER VI.

A sad parting.

I CAME to bid Mrs. Mitchell and yourself good bye," said I, entering the cottage where I had become so intimate during my residence in Leith, as to make it unnecessary to announce my coming by rapping at the door. The family consisting of Saunders, his wife and son, were at breakfast, to which the kind old man gave me a hearty invitation.

"I'm real glad to see you, mem, will ye sit down and tak pot luck wi' us?"

"I have taken breakfast, but I would like to have a cup of Mrs. Mitchell's tea," said I, sitting down on the chair placed for me by the young man.

"Whan are ye ga'en?" asked Mrs. Mitchell, and without waiting for a reply, added—"The gudeman was up at the house last night, after the funeral, and Marion said that ye're no ga'en to the Indies now, but to America, that Mrs. Percy's there, our Sandy was once very fain to gang there."

"So I was, mother," said the lad, "An I would hae been there noo, and maybe had land o' my ain, gin

you had'na set your face clean against it; it was a black job for me that I didna gang."

In all my visits to the cottage, and they were many, I had never before heard the sound of Sandy's voice, indeed, seldom seen himself, if he happened to be present, he always took himself off into another room; the lad spoke with a clear voice and in a determined, although respectful manner, not at all as I should have expected one of his habits to do, giving me a more favourable impression of him than I had been wont to entertain; his mother sighed as she said in reply—

"I did do that, Sandy, I stood out against your going, for many a long day, and many a sore heart I've had in the dark midnight, when everybody else was sound sleepin', because I keepit ye back, I put mysel' in the Lord's place whan I put against it, I thought I could keep ye frae a' ill, gin ye were aye wi' mysel', but in the place o' that, it has whiles made me the most sorrowfu' woman that ever walked on green grass."

"If I had the money to pay my passage, I wad gang noo," replied the lad, "But there's nae use speaking about onything o' the kind, I had it a' roun, ance, and I would no be let go, and I'll never have as much again, never."

He got up as if to leave the room, his face flushed, as I fancied more in regret of the past than in anger, although his eyes flashed with a quick light, as if he

thought his backward course was not all his own fault, his father turned towards him, saying—

"Sit down, Sandy, my man, I want to say a word or twa afore ye gang out." The old man was sitting on the same side of the little breakfast table as his son, and putting his brown hand on the youth's shoulder, said "gin ye think ye'll dae better in America than what ye can at hame, I'll gie ye siller tae gang wi', the want o' ten poun', or ten to that, wanna haud ye here a day langer than ye like to bide, and I'm sure your mither winna say a word against it now."

The mother's face told a different tale: she seemed terror stricken, pale as death one moment, the next crimson.

"Oh gudeman," said she, her voice trembling with emotion, "What maks ye pit such nonserse into his head, the laddie does'na want to gang to America noo, he might dee there and no ane to lift his head, or gie him a drink o' cauld water, or nae minister to speak a godly word to him."

"There's nae fear o' that, Elsie, woman, there's godly folk in America as well as here, and them that does well for themselves 'ill find kind folk a' the warld through, I would'na say but its the best thing Sandy could dae, he can gang in the ship wi' Miss St. Clare, and gin he dinna like the place, he can come back again wi' her, sae that he'll no be lang awa, gude wife."

"There's nae use steekin' the hallan door to keep out the win' that never blew, father," said the young

man, "ye hav'na twenty poun' mair than I hae, and ye need'na think that Marion wad ge'it for me to gang to America wi', I wad hae been there long ago if she would ha' lent me ten poun', but she tell't me very plainly that she was feared I wad put it to an ill use."

"Weel, maybe she is," replied his father, "but I'm nae feared o' ony sic thing, sae gin ye say the word, ye'll get yer twenty poun', and ye can ge'it back to me when ye hae doubled it for yer sell," and turning to his wife, he said, "ye hear what he says, Elsie, gin he had had the siller, he wad hae been off lang sine; think ye it wisest to let him gang, some day that we ken naething about it, wi' holes in his stockings, and maybe nae a clean sark to his back, or to gang wi' his kist fu' o' hale clean claes like ither folk?"

"Weel, gudeman, I'll no say anither word, I'm willing to let him gang;" said the mother, her face and voice sadly at variance with her words.

"Where will ye get the siller, father?" inquired Sandy, who seemed now to entertain some hopes of his really being able to realize what it seems had been his desire since early boyhood.

"I'll get it where I put it, my man, in the bank," was the father's reply.

"And what way did ye get it to put there?"

"I won that, and as mickle mair; forbye our bread and claes since I came to this house, and if I be spared, I'll win mair afore I dee, and I never stinted to gie a share to them that was needfu', or yet to gie an

offerin' to the Lord, o' white siller, whan the board cam roun' in the kirk on the Sabbath."

The young man's face betrayed his feelings, as a mirror would have reflected his face, shame for his own part largely predominating, he seemed for a few minutes unable to speak, at last he said in an earnest voice and determined manner, as if he knew it would be difficult for those whom he addressed, to give implicit belief to his promises.

"I'll tak your siller, father, and gang to America, and I'll never war a shillin' on onything warse than my daily bread, till I pay it back again, and ye need not be feard, mither, but what I'll come back again, and whan I come, I'll hae a Sabbath coat for mysel' and something to you forbye."

His poor mother's eyes were full of unbidden tears which she tried in vain to screen from observation, but finding that those tears she dried up were succeeded by others that were larger, and came quicker, she hurried from the room, followed by Sandy.

I am not sure that I quite liked the arrangement which had been so suddenly come to, yet I would not for the world that the old man should suspect this; so there was nothing for it but to submit with a good grace, in hopes that the father's confidence in his son, was not misplaced, and I lifted up my soul in silent supplication to his Heavenly Father, and my own, that He would give grace to the poor drunkard, that he might be stopped in his downward road, and

enabled to keep the promise he had made to his sorrowing mother.

What a common grief; there is scarcely a family, if its inner life were laid bare, in which it does not repeat itself, where some boy, the most generous, loveable of the group, is not going along the same downward path to ruin and death, to death by his own hand, true, it may be only by the slow suicide of drink, but no less surely by his own right hand, there is no such terrible tragedy, no words so full of soul-stirring pathos as that which tells to eye or ear, of a great household, where one of its members, a dearly loved son or brother, or sadder still, if possible, a father, or saddest phase of all, a mother, whom no earthly power can keep from treading day by day, the sure path to ruin, death and hell.

"There has been so much false reasoning on both sides of the subject, such a war of words, bigotry and adjuration, that it is, more than all other questions, worn out and distasteful, particularly among those very people who will not merely for the *slight* cause that it may be a stumbling-block to an erring or weak brother, banish the wine-cup from their homes; but the numbers sent to death and destruction become no less, because people of refinement and position taboo the subject. Its fatal effects upon the mental power and spiritual health of our land are no less obvious and appalling. The evil is a physical plain matter of fact, and must be grappled with in a plain physical way. It has been the custom both in

and out of the pulpit, to represent intemperance as a 'Temptation of the Devil,' to be met and resisted by prayer and faith. The drunkard is simply a sinner, he is entreated to repent by all the terrors of earthly ruin, and the eternal death beyond the grave. His miserable wife and starving children are held up before his conscience, which is invariably considered as seared. There is much truth in this view of the case, but it is not all the truth, we cannot afford to ignore prayer and faith, they are the sword and shield which our Blessed Lord has given to cut away evil and guard us against it, but what would we think of a man, who, having fallen into a deep well, prays to be delivered therefrom, and then sits down calmly to await for an angel to effect his deliverance; is it not more in accordance with true faith that while he says in his soul, 'Save me, oh my Father, and shew me a way out of this living grave,' that his eye should wander in search of some crevice in which to place his foot, some stone jutting out from the black wall he may catch hold of to aid him in his ascent to light and liberty, or will he for a moment relax his efforts until his foot is again on the green earth, and he is once more a free man? And so should it be with us who are not yet, thank God, 'entangled in the same yoke of bondage,' while we pray earnestly for such men and women, feeling that to us the Lord may yet say, 'This man shall perish in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at your hands.' It is time that we looked at the other side of the question, and through the poor drunkard's own eyes; wife nor

children are usually neither so hungry, nor so heart-broken as he is, cover it as he may by braggadocia or otherwise; he most surely realizes more clearly his earthly ruin and eternal damnation, with more agony of soul than the children whom he begs, the wife whom, peradventure, he sends to an early grave, or the man of God who preaches to him; yet he deliberately walks down to Hell for whiskey, which in all probability, has long ago ceased to yield him any pleasure, further than dulling his sense of responsibility for this world and the next; whiskey has to him become a physical necessity—'Drunkenness,' says one of our great authorities on the subject, 'in eight cases out of ten is either an hereditary or acquired disease as much as consumption or small-pox,' let us treat it as such, and betake ourselves to the use of physical remedies. This fact is now understood by the medical world, the United States can boast of two or three Asylums for inebriates, noted for the success which has attended their efforts in a greater cause than the abolition of slavery; the poor drunkard is enslaved, soul and body—and that for evermore, but not until the theory on which this treatment is based, is understood and acknowledged by the people, by the parents or wives of drunkards; not until then, can any good be done to the millions who are writhing in despair and dying in their sin, hurried into unblest graves, by the terrible whiskey curse.

When the time comes that every mother, rich and poor, will fully comprehend that her child may be

born with a thirst for strong drink, an inherited disease, so affecting his whole system, that a craving for stimulants is morbid, and once indulged in, most certainly fatal, she will take the same care to guard him against it, as she would if he inherited consumption, and the children, male or female, will be safer if they know that stimulants which may be (safely ?) indulged in by others, are neither more nor less than poison to them, body and soul.

Drunkards, with whom the disease is not hereditary, are nearly all sanguine genial men and women, for whom mental excitement is a necessity, and whose cure therefore lies in the healthy stimulant of constant employment, which, by those who have made the subject their life study, is considered the best counter-irritant of the brain or emotions.

It is to be hoped the day is not far off when this most widely spread and most lamentable of all diseases, will be as thoroughly understood as others less mortal, and the poor victim can turn to his physician for some means of cure instead of to a drunkard's shameful death and dishonoured grave, as his only chance of relief."

The old man accompanied me to the garden gate, in silence, and as he took my offered hand in parting said—"I doubt I have put a sair hank round your neck, Miss St. Clare, when I offered Sandy the siller to tak him to America, a poor foolish lad like him is no just the one a lady would like to let the ship's passengers see was ane o' her acquaintance."

I answered honestly, "I do not say I would have chosen Sandy for a companion, had the choice been given me, although not from the cause you allude to, but the event seems to have been arranged by a Higher power than either you or me. The whole affair was so suddenly determined upon, that even to my half-doubting soul it appears like the work of Him, without whom a sparrow cannot fall to the ground, and as such we must take it to be until we see the end. Perhaps taking Sandy away from companions as foolish as himself, may break his evil habit, and you and other godly men can plead his cause with the Lord."

"Aye, praise be to His name, we can do that, and as Hedid for His people of old, when He came from Sinai and rose up from Seir, while from His right hand went a fiery law for them, and they sat down at Thy feet, so Thou art able yet to do for my poor son, and to make him sit down at Thy feet—even Thy feet." As the old man spoke, he lifted his bonnet from off his head, as if he realized the presence of Him whose power he invoked, commencing by answering me unconsciously, his mind and speech addressing the great All Father, his clear blue eye upturned to the skies, seeming to pierce through the blue depths to the great white throne whereon the Ancient of days sat; his long white hair falling back from his broad forehead, and handsome features, on which the bright morning sun fell almost unbroken through the light leaves of the birch that

twittered and trembled above the little gate he held in one hand ; I felt as if the Holy Spirit was speaking now by this old man, as surely as He did by him to whom it was said, 'Draw not nigh hither,' and then it was given me to believe that He in His working and His power is the same yesterday, to-day and forever.





CHAPTER VII.

"When we were gay gallants we rode at the ring,
And the young Earl of Murray he aye was made King."

AT two o'clock on Wednesday morning, Mr. Morton, according to promise, came to accompany me to Glasgow, and see me on board the steamship which was to bear me to my field of labor. I went to Marion's bed-room to bid her good-bye, but, to my surprise, she was not there, nor had her bed been slept in, I came to the conclusion that she must have gone to spend the night at her father's cottage, so as to be with her brother, the few last hours of his sojourn at home. I had a bunch of snowdrops in my hand, which the French nurse brought me the evening before, so placing one of these on her pillow, to speak for me, I departed.

Old Saunders Mitchell and his son were waiting for us at the depot; on our arrival, the old man informing us that his wife had insisted upon his remaining with Sandy until the ship sailed; poor old man, his usually cheerful face looked serious and sad, it was too evident that parting with his only son, under such circumstances, was as the waters of Marah.

The morning was lovely, the blue grey sky streaked on the verge of the horizon by hues of crimson and gold. Mr. Morton and I had just seated ourselves in the cars, and were trying to draw the best amusement possible in such a place, by watching those who were pressing on with busy feet, to get possession of the best seats, when a handsome phaeton drawn by a pair of beautiful greys, drove up to the stand; I pointed them out to Mr. Morton, who immediately said—

“Yes, beautiful indeed, they are the greys Lady Gordon bought for Mrs. Percy on her marriage, I should like to pat them for the sake of her who was so fond and proud of them; I was present when Captain Percy told her they were sold, and can see now the tears which filled her eyes, and can hear the half-choking voice in which she said, ‘Oh no, Bertram, you surely could not have sold my beautiful greys who are so gentle when I drive them, and mamma’s gift.’ Although she deprecated the belief in his having sold her pets, she knew, even at that early day, it was too true. The gentleman who is driving, Sir James St. Clare, bought them then, they have been well cared for, they look as well as ever, after six years driving, while their beautiful young mistress, then so full of hope, lies in a strange grave, the wild wintry winds as they rave o’er her head, and the fierce, hot Canadian sun as it scorches and withers the grass growing above her bright hair, alike unheeded.”

"What a strange craze it was his selling his wife's ponies; such beautiful creatures."

"It was no craze; Marion, when she spoke of it the other day, only knew the fact of their being sold, but not the motive which prompted its being done, or I should rather say, the necessity there was that such should be done; they were sold to pay a gambling debt, a so called debt of honor, incurred in one of the billiard saloons of Edinburgh, and instead of his supplying their place, it was Major Seaton who bought the fawn-colored ponies, and afterwards when these again went in the same way, he bought the black horses that were let on hire to Captain Percy, to prevent them from being sent on the same errand as their predecessors. It was a thousand pities she did not choose Cousin Hugh, as she called him, instead of the unprincipled fellow whose bad conduct, no doubt, sent her to an early grave."

"It would, indeed, seem like infatuation choosing the mate she did, and refusing Major Seaton; the one, handsome, generous, brave, his praise in everyone's mouth, the other undersized, bull-necked, with nothing to recommend him, as far as I can learn, except a talent for mimicry, a very doubtful good, I should imagine in one, who, it seems, was far from an independent gentleman."

"You have under, instead of over-drawn the picture," replied my companion, in reply to the look of interrogation with which I concluded my last sentence. "Hugh Seaton has been from his boyhood

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up, a pattern of all that is manly, noble and true; when we played ball, or ran races, Hugh was always first to win, no matter how long the line or score, we called him long-legged Hugh, and at last refused to allow him compete either at race or ball, and when we began to put away boyish sports, and took to riding the ring, we never disagreed once as to who would lead, Hugh was always made King, and to this day, from Land's End to John o'Groat's, none bestrides his steed more gracefully, and large man as he is, few will outstrip him in swiftness; this is, of course, in part owing to the horse he rides, but we all acknowledge the force of the old adage, a bad rider never had a good steed; and that he can wield his sword so that the old manly Seatons never did better, witness the Victoria cross and the row of medals hanging from their scarlet and blue ribbons which grace his coat at a military dinner, well won on the battle fields of burning India and frozen Russia; and more than all, he is the poor man's friend in word and deed; he, as heir to Thurlow, has a handsome income derived from his father's estates; a few years since, the leases on Thurlow were run out; owing to the two previous seasons having been unprecedentedly wet, the tenantry were grumbling terribly, and came in a body to request a reduction of their rents, his father refused to accede to their demands, saying it was impossible, but noble Hugh gave up every shilling of his income, that it might go to reduce the rents, and so, when he becomes laird, he will be a poorer man by at least a thousand pounds a year, than

his father, or his father's father, but I doubt, much honored as the Seatons of Thurlow have been by rich and poor, in their day and generation, if any of them have reached the height from which Hugh looks down."

I sat silently thinking over poor Mrs. Percy's *mauvaise destinée* for several minutes, and then said almost mechanically, as we sometimes do, repeating some stereotyped idea, because we fancy we are expected to speak.

"I hope Major Seaton will find some one else to love, who will be worthy of him, and can return his love."

"As to his finding one to love him, and that for himself, not his broad acres, I opine, this would not be difficult, nor need he go far to seek such an one, but unless he himself changes in a more than ordinary degree, it is very unlikely that he will ever feel sufficient interest in another woman, to desire that she should be his wife. Yesterday evening, as he and I were walking along Prince street, we met two very beautiful girls whom we both know and esteem highly; the ladies stopped and spoke to us for a few minutes; when they passed, I said half in joke, 'were I a rich fellow like you, I would try to make an impression on Miss——,' naming the elder of the two. 'Oh Robert!' said he, 'how little we know what passes in the inmost heart of our most intimate friend, you and I see each other almost daily, we have been true and unreserved friends from our boy

hood, and yet you are ignorant of the feeling most alive in my soul; I had rather kiss the green turf on Tiny Gordon's grave than press my lips to the cheek of the fairest face in Edinburgh.' After a moment's pause, he added. 'And I will do so ere long; as soon as I can get leave of absence, I will go to Canada.'"





CHAPTER VIII.

THE VOYAGE.

"Onward she glides amid ripple and spray,
Over the waters, away, and away."

WHAT a beautiful thing is a ship," I mentally exclaimed as I looked from the spacious deck up to the bright orderly rigging with its tall strong masts seeming endowed with life, as loosened from her moorings the ship slowly moved from the shore. A childlike voice calling out in bitter accents, 'mamma, mamma, the bridge is broke,' attracted my attention from gazing upwards, to the scene around me. From the ship I looked to the shore, and the first object that met my sight was Saunders Mitchell's thin gray hair floating back from his face as he waved his hat in a last adieu to the son his sad face told but too plainly he thought he was parting with forever; we were still so near the shore that I could easily see the distressed brow and the pale lips rigidly compressed as if he feared his heart would fail, and thus betray his forebodings, his woe and weariness, to the strangers around him. The



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direction in which his face was turned at once indicated to me the place which Sandy occupied on the lower deck. I was painfully alive to the construction that might be put upon my conduct by entire strangers as I made my way towards young Mitchell, but I remembered the sacred promise I had made to the old man, and I knew how every trifling incident of the few minutes now passing would haunt his waking and sleeping vision for weeks to come, so banishing the lookers on from my thoughts, I sought the place where the young man stood. On reaching Sandy, I requested him to wave his hat in token of good bye both for himself and me to the old man on shore; he obeyed with an alacrity which surprised me, shouting out good bye—good bye—twice or thrice, and waving his hat long after it was impossible to distinguish one face from another in the sea of heads which lined the shore.

Sandy's feelings were evidently as strong as his father's, and had been doubtless subdued and pent up to the last moment, and when the shore we left became but a dull and indistinct outline in the distance, he betook himself alone to a distant part of the vessel.

The first few days of our voyage we had head winds and at intervals drizzling rain, so that I saw little or nothing of my fellow cabin passengers; I felt no sickness myself and consequently kept on deck wrapped in my waterproof as often and as long as the weather would permit. Among several lady

passengers I knew there was one who had two or three little children; there seemed to be quite a number of gentlemen on board, among whom were two clergymen, one a young Presbyterian minister going out to a charge in Canada, the other an Episcopalian clergyman settled in Canada who had been making a tour through Britain, France and Germany. The latter was a tall gentlemanly old man, handsome in spite of old age and extreme thinness almost approaching to attenuation, during those first few days, while no other lady was on deck, he came frequently and sat by me conversing freely on such topics as he fancied might be interesting; he spoke of the bright blue sky and warm summer in Canada rivaling that of Italy, said he knew Montreal well and told me it was a city of churches and convents, from its situation one of the most beautiful of modern cities, being built on the slope of a mountain at the base of which swept one of the largest rivers in the world, prophesying that after having spent two or three years there, which he imagined I intended doing, I would be as unwilling as himself to return to Britain, he himself was a Briton, yet not to be made a Bishop would he consent to live always under the cloudy skies and on the damp earth of his native land.

I went several times a day to talk to Sandy, poor lad, he was sick, and seemed very miserable, and I am sure felt then, sincere repentance for the foolish, reckless life which made him an exile, sick and sad, without the help of the kind hand that had ministered to him from infancy upwards.

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The only others of the steerage passengers whom I saw, or at least noticed in those few cold rainy days, was a tall, thin elderly woman dressed in gray, almost black wincey, and the peculiar cap with its band of black ribbon, worn by the wives of small farmers or rather crofters in the Highlands; she had two children with her, evidently her grand children, the boy, the youngest of the two, she constantly carried in her arms, although he seemed to have reached his sixth or seventh year. She would bring these two children on deck, at least every hour, for a few minutes, and then descend again to the steerage. As a refuge from the monotony under such circumstances I used to watch for her appearance, and talk a few words to her, making inquiry how her sick grand children were getting on, etcetera. The first time she spoke, I was surprised to find that her voice was a sweet toned English one, and despite her dress and appearance, which were evidently Highland Scotch, not one word with a gaelic accent fell from her lips. The third day, the skies cleared, and we were sailing under a balmy soft wind, yet notwithstanding, the old woman and her grand children did not appear on deck, even when the sun was high in the Heavens. I now felt so much interested in them, that with the Captain's permission, I went to the steerage to find out what was the matter. The little boy was very ill, had been so from the evening previous, and lay gasping for breath, his features seemingly sharpening fast into death, the poor woman using every persuasion to induce the little suffering thing

to taste some gruel which was evidently to him very nauseous, he turning away his little pale face, as much as his weakness would allow. 'Alas!' said his grandmother, 'he has been so much accustomed to good milk and fresh air out on the hills, where I took him from, that he will die for want of both in this terrible place, and she will soon follow,' she added, with a look and accent of utter despair, as she pointed to the little girl who sat on the floor, her head leaning on the foot of the bed where her brother lay, her eyes closed, but not in sleep, her lips parched, and partly open. 'I kept them out in the fresh air,' said the grandmother, 'as long as I could, but now Jemmy is too sick to be moved, and I'm sore afraid they'll both go the same way.'"

I had been provided by Mr. Morton's care, with the best state-room on the vessel, one containing two beds and a sofa; when I saw what was provided for me, on coming on board, I remonstrated at the extravagance of giving me so much waste room, but Mr. Morton laughed away what he called my fit of petty saving, and during the last three days, I had often felt very pleased that I was not subjected to the annoyance of having a sick companion in such close proximity, as a sharer of your room on board ship, necessarily entails. How deeply thankful I felt now for that empty bed and sofa, and I hurried to the Captain to request his permission to have the woman and her grand-children removed from the stifling atmosphere of the steerage to the fresh sea breeze

which came careering so pleasantly from the little window in my state-room.

"You are very kind, Miss," replied the Captain, "and, perhaps this may save the little fellow; there is little else the matter with him than sea sickness, aggravated, no doubt, by the change of food."

The Captain, kind, good man, went himself and superintended the removal of the children, he, carrying one, while the grandmother carried the other. Everything was so spotlessly neat and clean around those children, the most delicate lady in the land need not have feared coming in contact with them; were it not so, I am afraid my philanthropy would not have gone the length of sharing my state-room with them. It was well however I was enabled to do so; the little boy continued so poorly, that until the last two days of our voyage he was unable to walk and then very feebly, his grandmother told me that soon after coming on board he sickened, and that though not in the usually troublesome way, was so weak as to be unable either to walk or eat. The little girl however soon rallied, and the day after her removal to my state-room, was running merrily around the deck. The grandmother I found was a woman of more than usual intelligence, one who had passed through the fiery furnace of affliction, but who had evidently in all her tribulation trusted in the Lord who bought her.

When we had been nearly eight days at sea, and the little boy was getting to look as if he had got a

fresh lease of life, I remarked to the grandmother the pretty red tinge that embellished the cheek of both boy and girl as they lay side by side in their rosy sleep, saying: "Your grandchildren are indeed very beautiful."

"They are not my grandchildren," replied the old woman, "They are neither kith nor kin of mine."

"And why then do they call you granny?" I inquired.

"Because the Lord gave them to me," replied the old woman. "And they are mine just as much as if I had borne them. I would not take the trouble to tell this to every one, but your kindness gives you a right to know the truth, and I would not even in this small matter, although it does not concern you (and likely you care little about it), be a deceiver. The children themselves think I am their grandmother, and will always do so until the Lord calls me to my own. If you have time and patience to listen, I will tell you how I got these children some time before we leave the ship?"

My curiosity was excited, I fancied some romantic tale was about to be disclosed, that the little ones with their soft brown eyes and rich golden hair which flowed in long wavy tresses past their shoulders, were perhaps of gentle blood, and that the old woman who cared so assiduously for them was perhaps the nurse of their mother or some other dependant of their family, although truth to tell the poorly clad woman before me had little of the badge

of servitude upon her, her manner, her speech, her very step had the freedom of one who had never served, but from affection. I replied at once.

"I should very much like to know your own history, as well as that part of it which brings in the two children. Your English voice struck me as being so much at variance with your Highland attire, that from the first time I spoke to you, I had a desire to hear the reason for this seeming paradox, and if you are inclined to tell me now, I will be a patient listener."

The old woman did not answer me for a few minutes, but sat with hands crossed on her lap, the almost black color of her wincey gown forming a strong contrast to the pure white muslin cap, the crimped borders of which closely covered her gray hair. As I looked at her and the beautiful children lying in their quiet sleep, I could not help thinking what a good subject for an artist's pencil, was before me. The old woman in the quiet beauty of her old age, perhaps the object of most interest in the group.

"You already know that I left my quiet English home to follow a Scottish soldier husband, who continued a lover until I laid him in his grave. His regiment was ordered from Malta to Gibraltar, and from thence again to India; at that time, soldiers wore nearly the same clothing beneath the hot sun of India, as they did in Britain, and in consequence of this, my husband fell sick; fortunately, we had between us, gained enough money to buy his dis-

charge, and we were fortunate enough to obtain a free passage, my husband assuming the duties of a gentleman's servant, and I by waiting on the same gentleman's wife, although, at the time, I had four children of my own to care for; I was not afraid to undertake this, I knew that I would not be sea sick, and the Lord in whom I placed my faith, and whom my Scottish husband had taught me to worship, gave me a kind and considerate mistress, and enabled me to do my duty both to her and also to my own little ones.

"In due time, we arrived at the shores of the Beaully firth, at a place called the Dream, and a beautiful dream it was, as beautiful as clear rushing river, rocky mountainous heights, crowned to their very top by larch and pine could make it, while from the door of the little croft house where we made our home, we could see the pretty village of Beaully stretched out amid fields of green grass and waving corn, while further on, where the salt waters of the Beaully firth coming up towards us, or running down with white waves to the great rocks of Cromarty, as the tide God gave to the sea when He set it the bounds it cannot pass, rose and fell. I had a happy home, with my husband and four children there, for a few years, and then God took him for whose sake I had left my own sunny Devonshire. It was a great grief, but like all griefs, small and great, the sting passed away, perhaps the sooner that I had to work hard for the support of my children;

God blessed me in my work, and, but that they had no father's knee to climb, and no father's tongue to counsel the lads as they grew up to manhood, they had no other loss."

"My eldest son had the passion for wandering, which marked his father, and as soon as his brother could help me with the farm, he went to Canada, where he has been for twenty years. Ten years ago, my only daughter married, and her husband and my second son resolved to go and seek their fortune where their elder brother had thriven so well. I would have most likely gone with them at the time, for parting with my children, was as if a knife was put into my heart, but my youngest son was 'a delicate lad from his youth, and the doctor assured me that he would never cross the ocean alive, so Jemmy and I settled down together in the old home where there used to be so much mirth; I used to complain sadly of the noise they all made when they came home in the evening from school or work. There was too little noise now, and we felt terribly lonely at first; we missed Jeanie's ballad songs, and Willie's funny tricks that used often to annoy in the old days, and sometimes make me scold, would have been welcome then; however, it was a happy little home, and we had constant letters from Canada, telling of their welfare; and promising that some day they would come and see us. At one time, a gentleman from Inverness, settled in Canada, came to see us, at the request of my daughter, and brought a whole nest of baskets made

by the Indians of America, pretty, bright looking things, but very different from the beautiful work made by the natives of the East Indies, some of which I had brought home with me."

Stopping for a moment, she looked up in my face, saying, "I am surely wearying you; it is always so; when I begin to speak or think of the old home and my children, and instead of telling you about these little ones whom you have seen, and been so kind to, I have been tiring your patience by telling you of people you neither know nor care about."

"On the contrary," replied I, "you interest me very much; I should like to know what you are willing to tell me of your Highland home, previous to your adoption (if I may call it so,) of those pretty children who now so fondly call you granny."

"I have little more to tell; soon after the others went, Jemmy from being a weak lad became an ailing one, and for the last six years of his life, he was only able to walk about the doors with the aid of a crutch. I had now to work very hard to keep Jemmy and myself in bread and the few other necessities we needed, although the cows never wanted the old care they were accustomed to, something seemed to have gone wrong among them; every year, one, and sometimes more died, and one year what we call a spate, sent down several streams from the mountain into the little burn that ran past our cottage, until it overflowed its banks, so that one morning I found it had come so near our cottage as to sweep

away the hen house and all its treasured inmates. Although this was a great loss to me, I regretted it perhaps less than anything else that befel me; I felt so thankful that the waters took the direction of the barns and not of our house."

"Not long after this, I was called to part with a dear one, that neither time nor money could replace. I laid Jemmy in the grave-yard at the Dream, beside his father, and thanked God, he never wanted meal nor milk, nor aught else until the day He took him. After Jemmy's death, all seemed to go wrong, until at last I was left with one cow and a few hens in a small barn attached to the house, the larger barn that used to be well filled, having fallen into disrepair, which I without money, or a man about the house, had no means of helping, and yet although this seemed a cross at the time, it was God's work that I and those two children should be saved from much suffering, perhaps from a bitter death.

"A summer and winter had passed away, and Jemmy's grave was as bright with gowans as his father's, the second summer and autumn were both gone in weariness and loneliness, and except on the sabbath when I went into the town as we called it to church, I seldom saw a human face from month's end to month's end. My nearest neighbours were four miles off and they only spoke their native gaelic, a language, notwithstanding all my efforts, I had never been able to acquire, indeed the only one whom I could converse freely with was a widow woman like

myself, named Fraser, who lived about six miles further up the glen and who once in two months or the like used to spend an hour or two, or perhaps pass the night with me as she went into the village to see a widowed daughter, who supported herself and children by her needle, and was very thankful when her mother came with perhaps a little meal or stockings for the children. She was poorer even than myself, and besides having the pleasure of her company, I was glad to extend to her a hospitality I had been accustomed to offer freely to others in my more prosperous days."

"It was the dreary month of November, and there had been a drizzling rain for nearly ten days before, with only a glint of sunshine for a few hours occasionally in the forenoon. I had been saving my eggs that I might go to Beaulieu to sell them and buy myself some oatmeal, and I had put my cloak on for this purpose, when to my surprise a brother of my husband's whom I had not seen since the day of Jemmy's funeral, and who was a well to do farmer twenty miles beyond the Dream, came up to the house with his horse and cart, driving a flock of sheep before him. He was a handsome tall man, as were all his race whom I had known, he greeted me in the kind hearty manner, and looked out of the same bright eyes as his soldier brother did forty years before."

"How are you, gudewife," said he, "I have come to take pot luck with you the day and rest my sheep."

"I was very glad to see him; it was quite an event in my lonely life, but my poverty was such that I scarcely knew what to give him, with the exception of the eggs that were packed up to be taken to Beauly, and a handful of meal certainly not enough to make one cake. It is true, I had a little tea and sugar, but a hearty man like my brother-in-law needed something to eat, and I dare say my embarrassed look as I welcomed him into the house, told him some of what was passing in my mind, and what I would gladly have hidden. He shook my hand in his hearty way, and then said hurriedly as if he knew he was going to impart welcome tidings:"

"I brought our meal from the mill yesterday, and I have brought a lock of it here for you, and our gudewife would nae be behind hand wi' yoursel', so she has sent you a little crock of butter and a bit kebbuck o' cheese." So he brought me in a whole boll of meal, more than had been in my house for two years, a nice little jar of butter and a cheese, saying, as he put down the heavy weight of meal from his shoulders, "Eppie bade me tell you that our bairns are wearing the stockings yet, you made for them last year."

"He was a good man and a kind, and would have me think that those presents were brought as a return for a few pairs of socks I had made for his children, instead of being brought as a help to me before the winter came on, when he heard, as he must have done, of my poverty. I very soon made him a

good breakfast, and shook his wet shepherd's plaid, and dried it by the fire. After a rest of several hours he went to put his sheep again in marching order, as we used to call it in the old soldiering time, and called out to me that an accident had happened, an accident indeed ! one of the largest and finest of his wethers, had broken his right fore leg. This was a great loss to the poor man, there was no help for it, the sheep must be killed. As some little consolation to him, I bade him leave the skin with me and I would spin and weave the wool which was very fine and beautiful, into stockings for his children during the long winter days coming on."

"I will do that," said he, "and the mutton too." I resisted this with all my might; it was loss enough to the poor man, the price he would have received from the south country drover who was to buy his sheep at Inverness, without giving away the mutton in this way. I suggested his selling it to a butcher in Beauly or Inverness.

"No, no," said he, I never sold a sheep to a butcher and I never will; all the sheep I kill are eat by our ain folk, and you are near as sib to me as they are."

"Killing and skinning the sheep and hanging it in the barn, so that I might easily cut it up myself, occupied so much time that it was getting towards evening before he departed;—the sky was dark and lowering and looking towards the hills, my brother-in-law said—

"You must make all as safe as you can the night—

it looks to me as if there would be another spate, and I would not wonder but it would be down on you before the morning."

"It was now too late for me to walk to Beaulieu with any hope of returning the same night, so I laid by my eggs in the basket as they were, and busied myself in packing my meal into the barrel. The quantity of provisions in my house was painful to me rather than otherwise; in bygone years, when such stores were common with me, there were dear mouths to feed, they who were far from me now across the Atlantic, and alas! alas!! the one who clung by me to the last, needed neither meat, nor drink nor shelter. I had not been able then to see clearly through faith in His name, what the Blessed Lord has given me to know, and rest in with perfect security now; that 'He came that we might have life and have it more abundantly,' and so surely as He rose from the dead and His disciples knew His face and heard His voice, so surely shall I see and know my son and touch his hand, and hear his voice when the days of my pilgrimage are over."

"It was an eerie time, that dull November gloaming with the brizzling rain pattering on the little window, and the wind in fitful gusts coming down the chimney and scattering the peat ashes around the hearth. The house was full of shadows, and my own heart so oppressed and weary that I wished God would let me lay my head down beside Jemmy in the grave-yard at the Dream; and I repented me then so bitterly that I had paid no heed to the many

letters which came to me during the past twenty months from Canada, intreating me to go to my children. I went towards the window, and opening the large Bible which lay there, came upon the book of Job, and I read—‘The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.’ I felt rebuked; my children, though far from me, were still in the land of the living; my own body was whole and free from disease and more provision in my house than had been for many a long day. Shutting the Bible, I said to myself, I was to go down as far as the cross roads, there may be someone wandering on the hills to-night who wants food and shelter. I have both to give, and the walk in the open air will do me more good than the wetting can do me harm. As I came out to the door, I saw that the burn had indeed risen considerably since my brother’s departure, and I drew my cloak over my head to guard me from the drizzling rain. It was God who sent me, and instead of going to the cross roads, I took the footpath that led through the woods down to Beaulieu, I seemed to be impelled by some inner feeling, and I made up my mind to go to a stile which was placed across the foot-path about two miles from Beaulieu to prevent horses and carts entering the wood; there were steps on each side, so that foot passengers might pass, the wall itself being nearly as high as an ordinary sized man’s shoulder. As I went on, the twilight was darkening in its gloom and I asked myself once or twice if I was crazy to be going aimlessly so far from home on such a cold rainy night. Still the feeling

which impelled me away from my cheerless home and on towards the white steps, as we called them, was stronger than any discomfort I felt from the cold, the approaching darkness and the rain. As I came close up to the white steps, I fancied I heard little voices, hence as I came nearer I made my footsteps as light as possible, and on coming close to the wall, I was well aware that it was no mistake, and that I did indeed, hear the sound of children's voices close to me; I got up on the two first steps, and leaning over, saw at the corner formed by the steps just under my eyes, what appeared to be a large dark bundle, at same time, hearing a little silvery voice, saying, "Put your feet up across my legs, Jemmy, we'll be nice here, until the light comes again, and then we'll not be long going to granny's." A younger voice replied, "But I'm real cold with the wet, and I dinna like to be out in the dark." I saw in a moment why I had been sent, and giving a slight cough, so as to warn the children, stepped up to the stile. In a moment, the bundle resolved itself into a little boy and girl, who at once got up, and running a little way from the wall, stood looking at me as I descended the steps, both at once calling out—

"Its granny."

"Its just granny, my bairns," said I, glad to see they were not afraid of me; "Where did you come from, and what brought you out this dark, wet night?"

"Mammy is dead," said the little girl, who was the older of the two, and apparently about six years of

age, "and the men put her in a box and took her away the day, and we heard them saying before they took her away, that they would bring us to Inverness, so we took a piece of bread out of the press, and came away to you, granny, but it was such a long road, and Jemmy's foot was so sore, we had to sit down here to rest, and when it grew dark, we were feart to go through the wood."

"Who told you we were here?" said the little boy looking up in my face.

"God, my child," said I, "sent me for you to bring you home."

"Was'nt that good of Him?" said the little boy. "Mammy said that God would take care of us, but she did'nt say He would send you for us, granny."

"Poor mother, it would have been hard for her to say so; I knew well who the children were; they were widow Fraser's grandchildren, their poor sickly mother, as well as the old grandmother, was now dead, and I praised the Lord for sending them to me in my loneliness."

"On descending the other side of the steps, and coming close to the children, I found that the little girl had taken off her petticoat, as she said, to cover their heads and to keep them from the rain, poor little thing, doing her best to make a shelter out on the dark hills, so that with the wall behind, and a covering over their heads, when they shut their eyes, they might try to fancy themselves safe from the darkness, that thing so dreaded by all children, and which she

knew so surely was fast coming on. I lifted the little boy in my arms, and taking the girl by the hand, brought them to the other side of the steps, but I had not gone a hundred yards on the woodland path when I found that the little girl was as unable to walk as the boy, so I tied her fast on my back, with my cloak, and with the other in my arms, I proceeded on my way, lifting up my soul to God in prayer, as I went, that He would give me these children in place of my poor Jemmy whom He had taken to the better land."

"I had about four miles to walk ere I would reach my home, and although it was yet early in the evening, the sky, by reason of the rain, was becoming very dark; however, there was no reason to fear, the road was a narrow and clear path, and led straight to a little bridge which crossed the burn, scarcely an acre from my own door. The darkness would not be so intense, even at midnight, that I could not find the way I had trod so many long years; on a broad moorland I might have wandered from the path, but in the wood there was no danger, the trees themselves would have kept me from doing so."

"I was not very strong then; I had wasted my strength in weeping and fasting; I had no heart to eat when there was no one to eat with me—a little porridge or tea, morning and night, was all I ever took since my son's death—so you may believe at my age my strength was not a great deal, but I never felt the burden of the children too much, or wished

to rest all the way. When I had gone about a mile, I spoke to one and then the other, but received no reply; the little things were fast asleep; I stopped, with a beating heart, half afraid that death had snatched them both from my grasp. The swinging motion caused by my walking having ceased, the children awoke, and both called out at once 'granny.' The dear little things, I was better pleased to hear that word than anything I had heard for many a day."

"It was dark enough before we came to the burn side, and when we did, I could see, dark as it was, that it was flooded from bank to brae, the bridge made of three planks resting on the banks was covered by the water, so that my feet splashed into it at every step I took, but thank God, I got safely over with my precious burden, and when they were in the house, and beside a good fire, and their wet clothes changed for some old things that had been by for many a day, they ate a hearty supper, and chatted merrily, making the old house look something like what it did twenty years before."

"In the morning, my first thought was to go to the door and see what like the burn was; it was now a great drumlie water, dashing past the house and over the fields round about, carrying trees and planks and great bundles of straw down with it; the ruins of our big barn were all gone, and the place where it stood covered with water, the bridge nowhere to be seen; the place where stood our own house and little barn was the only dry spot in sight, and the

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rain falling as if the water floods of Heaven were opened. I shut the door on the cold wind and rain; it was a dreary November day for many a one in Scotland; I knew in part, even then, the desolation it would cause in many a house in the glen, and as I gazed on the clothes of the children, which I had put to dry on chairs opposite the fire the evening before, I raised up my soul in praise to God for having sent me out on that eerie walk the evening before, so that I might be the means in His hands of saving these little innocents from a miserable death; had they survived the cold and wind of the night, crouching as they were at the cross steps, it would now be impossible for them to reach a human habitation. The same burn that was now speeding furiously towards the sea, was crossed by a little bridge, similar to the one that had been swept away nearly opposite my cottage, the second bridge lying nearly half a mile nearer the town than the cross steps, the poor little things would have been hemmed in on all sides by a waste of waters. Verily, the Lord is a rich provider. He not only saved the children alive, but He sent more meal and meat to my house, to feed them, than I had had in it all at once for two years back."

"When the children were up and dressed, the little girl asked me, as she had done the previous evening, if they would kneel down at my knee and say their prayers to God, and then they knelt down as they before had done, and first little Annie and then her brother repeated 'Our Father which art in Heaven,'

each waiting with clasped hands and bowed down head, until the other had finished, and then both together repeated the beautiful hymn: 'My God who makes the Sun to know his proper hour to rise,' as they had said the night before:

'Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.'"

"It was easily seen the children had had a praying mother, and her faith and prayers were round about them when her body was lying in the churchyard. While they were eating their breakfast, I began to question them as to how they got along the two weary miles from Beauly to the cross steps, and if they were not hungry."

"We were not tired, said Annie in reply to my questions, "until the rain came on, and we were not hungry, for we had plenty of bread that I tied in my pinafore, but when the rain began, Jemmy was cold and wanted to go back to the house again, but I minded him on what mammy said to us every day, that if we prayed to 'Our Father which art in Heaven,' He would take care of us and bring us to our granny; and then we knelt down and said 'Our Father,' and after that Jemmy was not so tired, and did not cry again until we came to the side of the dyke, and it was so dark, we were afraid to go further; we knelt down at the dyke and said 'Our Father' twice over again, and after that I took off my petticoat and made a little housie for us at the side of the dyke. I was sure God would send you for us, but it was very cold,

and Jemmy was crying and wanting to be at home again."

"I then asked Annie if she was not afraid when she saw me coming?"

"Oh no," said she, "we knew it was you, very well; I told Jemmy before you came, that God would send you when it was dark."

"Poor little things; in their simple faith, they trusted in God, and He was to them as He is to all who trust in Him, a very present help in time of need."

"From what I gathered from the children, it seemed that their poor mother had not known of widow Fraser's death, which was the more surprising as it must have taken place fully three weeks before her own."

"It was ten days ere the water abated, and it was many weeks before I could take a step further than the hillock on which the cottage was built; all the fields over which the waters spread, were little more than slush and mud; the first time I tried to put my foot beyond the hillock, I sunk more than ankle deep, and had some trouble in rescuing my shoe which remained in the mud after I had succeeded in drawing out my foot, but it was a happier time for me, with first the waters and then the mud round me, than I had known for many a day. The children endeared themselves to me with their sweet ways, more and more every hour, and for them my little home with its spence and but and ben, seemed a grand place in

their eyes, accustomed as they were to the one poor little room their mother could pay for by her sewing. The hens were objects of special delight, and the collie dog, and even the cow were objects on which they lavished their tenderness in the shape of little soft pats and strokes. Poor little Annie, who would fain have been a nurse, was sadly disappointed when after repeated endeavours, she found that none of the hens would sit on her knee and allow themselves be petted."

"A fine frosty winter set in, and when I found the ground was quite hard enough, and I could be certain of having firm footing all the way to Beaulieu, I set off one morning at the break of day, to see what was said about the children's disappearance, and whether I could not manage to obtain some right to them. The evening before, I told the children I was going away for an hour or two, but would be back before dinner, and that they were to rise, dress themselves, and take their breakfast of bread and milk which I had left for them, and leaving the collie dog, I had no fear."

"I went straight to the house where their poor mother formerly lived; the man who owned it, now stayed there himself, and on asking for the children, he shook his head, and with a grave grieved look, he told me that the day of their mother's funeral was the day before the spate, that while he and others interested in them were gone from the house to bury the dead in a distant church-yard where her husband


was laid, the children had wandered away unobserved by any one; it was dark when he returned from the funeral; that every search was made for them among the neighbouring houses, yet from that day to this, they had never been heard of, that there was no doubt they had wandered in the direction of the firth and perished in the waters; the old man adding, 'Poor little things, it is better as it is, they have no one belonging to them and must have gone on the parish.' I told him how I had found the children, and that they were in good hands, and I had soon a number of people gathered round me eager to hear all I had to tell, and all pleased to hear that the poor little things were safe and well. I next went to the minister and from him obtained authority to keep the children;

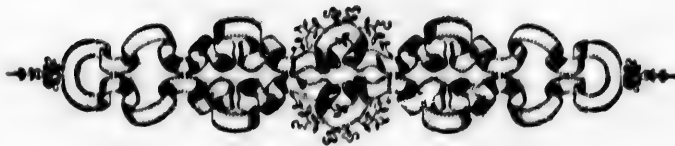
not only did he do this, but offered to help to maintain them by giving them parish relief. This was no doubt kindly meant by him, but I would rather have brought them up on potatoes and salt, than have allowed them to eat the bread of charity."

"Everything thrived after they came to the house, and although we were only two years on the farm after they came, I sold a cow and a dozen of sheep besides scores of fowls. I wrote to my children telling them how God had sent widow Fraser's grandchildren to my care, and my daughter has ever since been begging me to come out to them and bring the children."

"A few months ago I had five hundred pounds left me by a brother I had not heard from for twenty

years, so I thought it best to take the children beside those who would care for them if I were gone. The interest of this money will keep the children until they are able to work for themselves, the principal I consider as of right belonging to my own children. Jemmy and Annie are both clever, and were I away to-morrow, they will have a kind mother in my daughter, and if I am spared a few years, perhaps I may save something to leave with them, as I have enough left from the stock and crop on my little croft to buy an acre or two of land beside my daughter's farm."





CHAPTER IX.

ON the morning of the fifth day, the sun rose bright and beautiful; the sky above head clear and blue, with here and there a streak of little fleecy clouds, making by the contrast the clear blue seem more deeply blue.

One feels on such a morning, as if with bodies differently constituted, it were an easy matter to enter the Heavenly portals which are then ajar.

The sea seemed a field of green, undulating glass, broken by little white crested billows, and the trail of our steamer glittering in the sunshine like a comet's train. On such mornings we feel our souls irresistibly raised in praise to the Great All Father for having placed us in a world of such beauty, and we feel a foretaste of the time when the Enemy who now seeks for our souls, and tempts us each day and hour to sin in thought, word and deed, will be chained for a thousand years, and can deceive the nations no more.

I do not know whether it was from the fact of my having been a governess, a circumstance I had not mentioned myself, but which seemed nevertheless well known all over the ship, or my having taken widow Campbell and her children into my cabin, (an act that

at least one of the ladies on board highly disapproved of, she having three children of her own, and as she termed it, being terribly afraid lest "the dirty little things should have some disease which those low children generally have," and so infest her darlings), or last and worst offence against the established rules of society, my going once or twice a day to speak to Sandy Mitchell on the lower deck, he being, unfortunately for me, a handsome young man about my own age; whether it was any one of these three offences, or all conjoined, I know not, but the result was, that I was pretty well ignored by all the ladies on board, except one; even the gentlemen were chary of their attentions.

The neglect of the gentlemen might have arisen from my homely face and shy, awkward manner in the presence of strangers; men, with all their boasted judgment and superiority in sense, are terribly frail where a fair face is concerned, and will chat and laugh with the possessor of such for hours, while a plain girl like myself is left to her own meditations entirely uninterfered with. But I do think, upon the whole, that the lords of creation have quite as much dislike to the *governess* as their fair wives and sisters have; they do not absolutely turn their backs upon us, as many ladies make no scruple of doing, but their air unmistakeably says in a certain nonchalant manner, "You are not one of our set; you must not expect us to open the door for you, or hand you to a carriage with an air of gallantry, as we do to Lady Edith or the Honorable Miss Blanche; you are simply to be endured."

It is true that Lady Edith's geography carries her no farther than Europe, and with a very superficial knowledge of even that portion of the world, she, sweet innocent of twenty-one years, talking of Nova Scotia as being in Upper Canada, or worse still, of the Cape of Good Hope as forming part of Australia, while the Honorable Miss Blanche, in writing to her friends, is apt, without the aid of a dictionary, to spell as she pronounces, and her knowledge of history is pretty much confined to the fact of Richard Cœur de Lion having been a brave warrior, who fought in the Holy Land, and Henry the Eighth, a shocking creature, who had a great many wives, and killed them all ! but as to who reigned in Russia fifty years ago, or who was king of Denmark fifty years preceding that, she neither knows nor cares ; it is true she might have heard of such things in the long past, when her governess, or perchance her brother's tutor tried (alas, in vain) to teach her the history of Europe, but she yawned through such tiresome information at the time it was given, and never thought of it since, her mind being entirely occupied with the weighty matters of dress and croquet, whether rose colour or peach-blossom are best suited to the colour of her eyes, or equally, perhaps more important consideration, whether white or coloured tulle are most becoming to her by gas-light.

I overheard one of the gentlemen on board, a respectable looking elderly man, evidently one who felt himself of importance, probably from his means and position both, and who was old enough to be

my father, say, in reply to a question put by another, as to who the young lady in black was; "She is some governess girl who was teaching in Edinburgh, and is probably going to seek some similar situation where she will be better paid on the western continent." The man's face betokened nothing hard or unkind; on the contrary, judging from his appearance, I should say he was an affectionate and indulgent father to his own girls, and would probably have resented with fierce look and reproving word, anything said by another to wound their feelings; but he did not stop for an instant to think whether the governess girl might not be as sensitive as his own cherished and richly endowed daughters, who might feel themselves sorely aggrieved were they to overhear one of the aristocrats who sometimes find it convenient to cultivate the acquaintance of those who are a step or even two below their own rank, saying with a stoney British stare, cold voice and polished manner, the more cutting because of its polish, "The girls in blue are daughters of a millionaire; Wilson made his money by tailoring, and he has now bought a fine place and set up for a gentleman. The girls have been carefully educated, but there is a *je ne sais quoi* which must be learned in their mother's boudoir which of course they have not; their manners have not the repose which marks the class of Vere de Vere;" the two others in gray who have not the sense to cover the large ears betraying their ancestry, are the daughters of an iron merchant; he is an equally wealthy man with his

friend, the tailor, and as pompous as if he were a Howard, while his lady strives to be kind and grand at the same time. The girls feel the importance of their father's long purse, his carriages, and grounds, and happy young women, are unconscious that with the nose of papa and the eyes of mamma they inherit the slightest tinge of the pomposity of one and the vulgarity of the other."

We are as a people, not unamiable or naturally unkind, but we are more indifferent than, as Christians, we ought to be to those who are either our dependants or, by the lack of fortune, placed in situations where it is absolutely necessary they must in some way or other earn their daily bread; this is particularly so in the case of a young woman, no matter how good, amiable, or well-informed she is, she may have been the daughter of a lawyer, a learned man in high position, or a clergyman who spent his life in God's service, and by the many freaks of fortune, on the death of father or husband, she must teach, or sew, or enter a shop, in such situation for the first few years at least, to earn almost bare bread. In the case of having a child a little brother or sister to support, the bread must be *very* bare; were we to think of this for a moment, it would make us careful indeed, lest we should add another sting to the life already too bitter; 'we little know the pleasure it may give, or the oppression of heart it may relieve, if we greet with a pleasant bow, and cheery smile the young lady, (ladies in the truest sense of the word many of them are) who the

previous day waited on us so patiently in the draper's shop, searching with such anxiety that she might match the very shade of ribbon we wanted, and unpacking bail after bail of muslin that we might obtain the breadth and pattern desired, without one word of murmur escaping her lips, or one shade of impatience in her eye, although the attenuated form and weary brow told too plainly that the constant life of standing (it is inadmissible for girls in a shop to sit,) was doing its work too surely in undermining a constitution perhaps never very strong.

While thinking on this subject, it has often occurred to me that were ladies to set themselves to it, they could, by a very slight attention to the time in which they make their purchases, do more to ameliorate the lives of both men and women, the employees of others, in the much agitated question of long hours, than employers will be able to effect for perhaps a generation to come.

Every year, we hear of young men making an attempt to have their hours of servitude shortened, and joining together to present petitions to their employers for this purpose; the young women not daring to do more than feel anxious for the success of their always failing experiment; were only a few ladies to set their face against making purchases after six o'clock, not only discontinuing such themselves, but impressing the same on their dependants, at the same time urging their friends to adopt a similar line of conduct; in a very short time, evening shopping would come to be

considered discreditable, and those masters who have stood out against early shop-shutting, be induced to adopt the system which many employers (all honour to them therefore) have been trying in vain to introduce; vain, because buyers prefer to go out in the cool of the evening to make purchases, which by a little self-sacrifice on their part, might be made in the cool morning instead; were each of us to think this subject over calmly, and to examine into it, each for ourselves, how much and how far we, as individuals, are to blame for the pent up lives in crowded, unhealthy shops which our brethren are leading, alas! alas! almost wearing out soul and body in a long drudgery we could help if we would, the subject would appear to us in the awful importance it assumes in the eyes of Him who made all flesh of the same blood, and each of us would exclaim with baited breath, "I am indeed my brother's keeper."

As we neared Portland, Mrs. Rochester (the lady referred to as having treated me with more consideration than the others,) inquired whether I had been careful in packing my trunk to avoid taking unmade or even unwashed apparel; I replied, that on the contrary, my ticket being bought in Britain to carry me straight through to Montreal, a British colony, I was not aware that such care was necessary; that I had left Scotland on a few days notice, and consequently had two unmade dresses, two dozen unhemmed pocket handkerchiefs, gloves, and various other articles which had never been in use.

"I am sorry for that," was her reply, "I fear you have got to lose them; all our trunks will be searched immediately on landing by a Custom House officer, and there is no chance of his allowing those articles to pass."

I felt very much annoyed by this, I could not doubt that Mrs. Rochester's account was correct, as she was an American and had crossed the ocean several times, although Mr. Morton had been assured in Glasgow that my through ticket would prevent any annoyance of the kind; had it been otherwise I should never have thought of bringing a shilling's worth of goods with me which could infringe the laws of the country I was to pass through; as it was, there was no help for it; I had, as Mrs. Rochester said, if the examination was made, to make up my mind to lose the things, the loss of them indeed being the least of the annoyance. What concerned me most was that I had thereby laid myself under the imputation of smuggling.

An hour or two after this conversation with Mrs. Rochester, one of the ladies who had hitherto not condescended to notice me, came up to where I sat and with great frankness entered into conversation. I was amusing myself by tatting, she offered to shew me a new pattern. She sat by me fully an hour, and was so gracious, that I was at a loss to conceive what her meaning could be. Towards evening she again seated herself beside me, chatting pleasantly, and making me laugh by quizzing some of the gen-

tlements on board, whose appearance and habits laid them open to smart remarks, offered me a bunch of grapes of which she said she had a basket full in store, and then came the explanation of her gracious condescension, "Don't you hate to have your trunks examined at Portland?" inquired she, "No," was my answer, "I have a through ticket to Montreal and I hope this will save me all annoyance."

"Perhaps it will," replied she, "I have been in France lately, and I have a small parcel of gloves, not larger than that, (measuring a small space in the air, with her hands), it will occupy but a little place in your trunk, and I will be ever so much obliged if you will take care of it for me; you can give it to me back when we arrive at the hotel. Although so small, the parcel contains fifty pairs of gloves."

The cool impudence of this request astonished me not a little, and as I looked in her face, my eyes doubtless told what I felt, as without waiting for my reply, she said—

"Even if your trunks were searched, they could never be found out as they are carefully packed up to look like a book."

"In that case," said I, "it will be folly in you to lay yourself under an obligation to an entire stranger, such as I am, nor would it be at all prudent in me to break the laws of the land I am passing through."

She coloured slightly, but immediately added—
"You have unmade dresses in your trunk." "True,"

replied I, "but these I can safely say are for my own use, which I could not of your fifty pairs of gloves."

She got up and left me, and I had not again the pleasure of being taken the least notice of during the half day that intervened previous to our landing.

I found out that the two clergymen, as well as the widow Campbell, her children, and Sandy were to be my companions on the railway to Montreal, and although neither of them had at any time addressed more than a few words to me, still I felt as if the rest of the journey would be less lonely for their presence.

Now came the landing; we were all desired to walk up to a covered platform on shore, and there wait for our luggage. Mrs. Rochester, who was the mother of the little girl who exclaimed on our leaving Glasgow, "The bridge is broken," told me to keep by her, and that we should go to the same hotel for the night, which I very gladly agreed to do; the possessor of the gloves was also close by on the platform.

As soon as the Custom House officer appeared, the latter placed her pretty little straw-coloured gloved hand on his arm, while with the other she held the key, saying, in a faint voice, and with a languid, beseeching look, "Oh pray, open my trunk first, I am so sick and weak I can scarcely stand, and the carriage is there waiting to bring me to my hotel."

The man looked at her with a sympathizing air, saying, "You look kind of sick-like," and turning towards the trunk, opened it at once. The contents

were covered with a fine white towel, on the top of which lay what seemed to be a couple of books loosely wrapped in newspaper. She lifted the books, and placing the parcel in his hand, said "just hold that for a minute, my two best dresses are here and I am afraid you will crush them," and while she spoke, lifting up the towel, placed it upon the wharf. She then took out the two dresses, shook them carefully and placed them on the towel, saying to the man, "now you can search yourself."

Still keeping the parcel in his hand, he lifted up each side of the clothes to ascertain if there was nothing else there, threw the parcel on the top, put the requisite mark in chalk, and moved on. She replaced her dresses, locked her trunk, and I fancy felt very glad that her fifty pairs of gloves were safe.

When it came to my turn, Mrs. Rochester made me show my ticket through to Montreal; the man made no remarks, merely looking inside my trunks, and chalking them as he had done the others. Mrs. Rochester's trunk occupied nearly as little time, although he examined it with the same care as he bestowed on that of the lady with the gloves, and in due time, freed from the Custom House officers, we arrived at the Exchange Hotel, where, as formerly agreed upon, Mrs. Rochester and I had a large double bedded room between us.

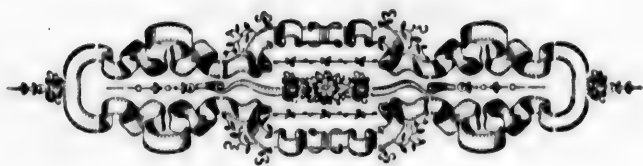
She was a large, heavy woman, and had wrapped herself up so, against the cold, before we left the boat, that I did not wonder at her complaining of being

extremely tired when we arrived; however, my wonder at her fatigue was lessened when she began to undress, as her three under-skirts consisted severally of velvet and silk, all made of enormous dimensions, the lining being of the same costly material, so that they could easily be transformed into dresses. This was not all; lace and ribbons were bound round her arms, cambric handkerchiefs folded inside the waist of her dress in all directions, while various pairs of silk stockings were smoothly folded under the pair she wore. I sat in mute astonishment while she disrobed herself, and when all was over, she seated herself, exclaiming with a sigh of relief, "What a mercy to be rid of all these things."

"Were you not afraid" asked I, "that all these things would be discovered?"

"I can assure you I was," said she, looking at me earnestly, "but you see I had no time to get those things made up, besides, I do not like your English dress-makers; I have suffered so much anxiety from having those things, and had so much trouble altogether, that they are dear bought."

She was a kind-hearted, friendly woman, and I parted with her and her pretty child next morning with regret, although I must confess I did not admire the lax way in which she obeyed the laws of her country.



CHAPTER X.

EXACTLY one month after the last interview between Captain Percy and Lady Gordon, recorded in the preceding pages, a traveller, warmly wrapt in buffalo robes, fur cap and coat, pursued his way in a one-horse sleigh along the mountain road leading from Montreal to Isle Jesus.

The man was in no good humor, and drove furiously over the frozen snow; before arriving at the Lachapelle bridge, a jolly French sharky standing upright in a brightly varnished, silver mounted double sleigh, the back seat of which was occupied by two ladies, and driving a handsome team of gray horses, called out to the traveller, in a loud voice: "The Queen's mail, the Queen's mail, clear the way for the Queen's mail."

The moody traveller slacked his furious driving, and drew to one side, upon which the Frenchman seated himself, and first giving a fresh impetus to his horses, turned round, and bowing with a gracious jolly air, to the other who had slackened speed and moved out of his way, exclaimed again: "The Queen's mail, the Queen's mail," laughing heartily as he spoke.

It was but too evident to the traveller that he had been taken in, that the bright carriage and gaily caparisoned horses did not belong to the Queen's mail, and with something very like a muttered oath, he spurred on his horse in the vain attempt to pass the other sleigh. This was impossible, from the snow-banks which rose on either side, and the jolly Frenchman well knew his advantage, swinging his whip gaily in the air, he again called out: "The Queen's mail, the Queen's mail," with a jaunty half-defiant air, and putting his horses to their mettle, he and his team were soon lost to sight.

The moody traveller had heard the smothered laughter of the ladies, and felt as if were his power equal to his wish, he would have lashed the ladies, the Frenchman and his handsome team, and sent them into one of the snow-banks; as it was, he had nothing for it, but to endure what he deemed an insult, and which by the other was nothing but a ruse to get in front, and thereby perhaps arrive at his destination a few minutes sooner than he would have done had he continued behind the single sleigh.

On the traveller went wrapped in his furs—crossed the Lachapelle bridge, without deigning to reply to an observation made on the severity of the weather by the man who took the toll, and in passing through the Bord-à-Plouff, up to the village of St. Martins, tried to share the lashes he had plentifully bestowed on his horse since leaving Montreal, with the little yelping curs that emerged from the cottages dotting the road on either side.

On arriving at the little *auberge*, the only place of entertainment for man and beast, which the little village boasted, he threw the reins to mine host, who obsequiously came to attend the *rara avis* of a gentleman travelling in such weather; and going into the bar-room, drank a quantity of brandy, which would have set one less accustomed to the liquor reeling, but seemed to act merely as a quietus to the traveller's disturbed spirit. Divesting himself of his fur coat, he requested mine host to care for his horse until his return, which he said, might be in a few hours, or might not be till next day, as he was going on to the neighbouring village of St. Thérèse, and expected a friend to meet him with his *voiture*.

The maitre d'hotel remonstrated with him on the folly of leaving his fur coat, saying, "The day is bright and clear, but Monsieur will be frozen if he rides without his furs; it would be different if Monsieur intended walking, the motion would be sufficient and the furs oppressive, but riding, Monsieur cannot go without his coat," and the officious Frenchman taking it up, offered to aid in putting it on again.

The only answer he received was a sullen, defiant look, as the other strode from the *auberge*, a second time ordering mine host, in better French than he himself spoke, to be careful of his horse.

"That is a curious, ill-tempered fellow," said the host to his mate, gazing from the half-glass door in the hostlery, as the traveller strode towards the cross-roads, his hands thrust deep into the pockets of the over-coat he had worn beneath his furs.

"He is an ill-natured fellow," replied the dame, "or else the brandy he has taken has made him so, he did not stint himself in that, and I just wish he would get the tips of his fingers frozen to teach him more politeness."

Captain Percy, for the sullen traveller was no other than he in one of his worst moods, pursued his way for nearly a quarter of a mile towards St. Thérèse, and then wheeling round, retraced his steps, making towards exactly the opposite direction.

As he got beyond the village, the path became less trodden down, at times causing him great difficulty in passing through the untrodden snow.

"I shall never be able to reach that abominable hovel," said he, in a half audible voice; were it not that I am spurred on by the hope of hearing that she is dead and buried, I would certainly go back to Montreal; I will be half dead myself ere I can reach that precious place;" halting for a moment, as if a sudden thought had struck him, he continued his colloquy :

"And if the people will not keep the cub, what am I to do with it? I never thought of that before, if I could afford to give them a hundred dollars, probably they would adopt it as their own, those savages are fond of such things, but the turn things have taken with that old Jezebel leaves me with scarce a penny at my command, and those wretches will doubtless be clamouring for the last few months board; it is no great deal, to be sure, but it is quite enough for

what she eats, she has supported her half-decayed body principally by whining, for the last two years. I wish the old Hecate could have seen her die in that wretched hut, and amidst people to whom she could not speak a word, it would have been rare fun," said he, and he laughed a low horrible laugh as the thought fashioned itself in his mind, and the words escaped his lips: "to have had the old jade chained in an iron cage, to see the young one whining out her last breath, so near that she could distinguish every look and hear every discontented whine, and yet so far, that she could neither make herself be seen nor heard; ah, if the old wretch had died a year ago, how would I exult? Her first voyage in the spirit would certainly have been a trip across the Atlantic, instead of the one she is now making to seek for her beloved child, ha, ha, ha," and he laughed a fiendish laugh, which almost startled himself, resounding, as it did, in the clear frosty air around him.

"One good thing," added he, in a more subdued tone, "wherever she goes, to Calcutta or Madras, she can never find out that we sailed from there; I took good care of that, nobody knew who we were, but poor Abby, and she has been as true to me as steel, since the first day I saw her."

Amusing himself, or lashing his spirit, whichever it might be, in this manner, he continued walking for about four miles on the open road, and then diverging into a by-path leading through the bush, he pursued his way amid deep snow, at times almost up

to his knees, far into the thick bush, guiding himself by a straight line towards the steeple of a church which he could see now and then when an opening occurred, many miles in the distance. After a long and tiresome walk, he reached a wooden cottage to which was attached a small steading and barn. It was the humble home of Momandagokwa, an Ojibawa Indian from the Pagan reserve beyond Onandago, who had fallen in love with, and married an Iroquois woman from Caughnawaga near Montreal. The woman who was herself a Christian, had sufficient influence over her savage husband not only to make him settle down near her own home among Iroquois and French Canadians, but also to have him baptized in the Catholic Church, by the name of Joseph Char-treux, a name however which the other Indians never called him by; Captain Percy met and recognized Momandagokwa on the street when he brought his wife from New York to Montreal, as he hoped, to die in a few weeks among strangers; he was becoming very weary of waiting for the event he so longed for, and hailed as part of his good luck, the old Indian whose acquaintance he had first made while on a hunting tour in the North-west, with some of his brother officers, when his regiment was stationed at Montreal, many years previous to his introduction to Margaret Gordon.

He was more than pleased with the rencounter when he found that Momandagokwa's home was in the bush, not over twenty miles from Montreal, that neither

his wife nor himself spoke one word of English, that they lived in the heart of the wild bush, seven miles from the nearest house, and that no one the Indian knew, could speak other than Iroquois or French, and to sum up all, Momandagokwa was willing to take Mr. Smith's (the name Captain Percy thought fit to assume) invalid sister and her child to board for the modest sum of ten dollars a month, with one hundred dollars more, to be lodged in the hands of the Curé of St. Martins, and delivered to the Indian, as payment for the trouble and expense of deathbed and interment; the latter ceremony Captain Percy assuring Momandagokwa, he would prefer being as simple and quiet as possible; his sister being a protestant, could not of course be buried in the cemetery belonging to the village, and as no service was necessary, it would be the best plan to choose a nice spot in the bush, and bury her there, "where" Captain Percy said heaving a deep sigh to impress the Indian with an idea of his love and sympathy for the sufferer, "the poor worn out body will at last find rest."

He had taken his wife there a year previous to the time of which we write, leaving her under the impression that her mother was dead, and that he was going home to inquire into the way in which Lady Gordon had disposed of her house and fortune.

He was now at the door of the cottage which he unceremoniously opened and walking into the apartment which seemed to be at once kitchen, parlor and bedroom, addressed himself to an old couple who

were seated by the stove, and without even the usual preliminary of, good day, he abruptly asked the question,

"Is she dead?"

"Bon-jour Monsieur," replied the woman, but he with a gesture of impatience exclaimed a second time:

"Is she dead?"

"No, Monsieur," replied the woman, in a serious subdued voice, "but she is very feeble, and eats less than the child does; sometimes for a whole day nothing will pass her lips except cold water."

"In that case," replied Captain Percy, hastily, "you should charge me less for her board."

"We could not well do that," replied the woman, "you took care to have her board at the lowest penny we could possibly give it, when you placed her here; I do not believe she will ever get better in this house where she has no one to speak to in her own tongue, so, if you can get a cheaper place for her, you had better do so; you told us when she came that she could not live three months; I am an old woman, little fitted to do more work than my own; I have kept her more for the love of God, than any profit we have had."

"It is not my fault that she has not died," growled Captain Percy, and then, checking himself, as if conscious that he had already said too much, added, "I told you what more than one doctor in Montreal told myself, when I was last here, I never expected to see her alive again."

Turning on his heel as he spoke, he pushed open a door at the other end of the room, and entering, stood transfixed, with a shock of surprise almost akin to horror, at the sight which met his gaze.

Seated close by the window, in a large rocking-chair filled with pillows so as to support her more easily, sat, or rather lay, what he believed to be the lifeless body of his once beautiful wife. The face although thin, was not emaciated, but so colorless, that the snow outside the window seemed scarcely less white than the face and beautifully shaped hands that lay crossed upon her bosom. Her fair hair streaming in undulating waves over one shoulder.

Except a small table placed beside the rocking-chair, and a bed at the farther end, there was no furniture in the apartment; the well scoured floor being covered a yard or two round the chair where the invalid sat, with little strips of catalaine, a kind of cotton carpet which the Canadian peasantry weave.

He remained in the door way for several seconds gazing on the white face and recumbent form before him; that he did so with a feeling of self-reproach, the first words he uttered testified too clearly.

"It is not my fault," he muttered in a subdued voice, as if conscious he stood in the presence of death, "I did not paralyze her, and how could I carry a half-dead woman about with me; besides the doctors all said she would be better in a quiet country home."

As he spoke, the old woman entered the chamber;

she evidently shared his belief that the spirit had fled from the white inanimate form before them.

"My God !" exclaimed Madam Chartreux, (as she always called herself. She had been much among the French Canadians in the vicinity of Caughnawaga, had learned many of their cleanly nice ways, and aspired to be considered one of them rather than an Indian squaw) "she is dead, and without seeing the priest."

The heavy white eyelids and dark lashes half raised themselves for a moment, and drooped again as if the trance or slumber was still unbroken.

"No," exclaimed the woman, "thanks to the good God, she is not dead," and calling in a quick loud voice to the old man, "Run, Joseph, harness your horse and bring Monsieur le Curé here with the greatest speed."

"You shall do no such thing," rudely exclaimed Captain Percy, "I told you before, she is a Protestant, and cares not for the rites of the Catholic Church ; besides it is pretty evident she is neither dead nor dying ; look at her now."

The loud tones in which the old woman and Captain Percy both spoke, aroused the sleeper to full consciousness. For a moment, the dark gray eyes seemed to gaze on vacancy, and then suddenly they were lit up with a smile of pleasure, and the cheek glowed with a hectic flush which might have cheated the beholder into the belief, that health with all its kindred blessings, shone there. "Oh Bertram," said

she, holding out her left hand towards him, and raising her recumbent form a little, as she spoke.

He came towards her, and taking her extended hand, raised it with a look of gallantry he well knew how to assume, to his lips.

"Why Tiny," said he, "you seem as well and look as beautiful as when I first saw you."

A faint smile illuminated her face, as she replied, "I shall never be well again, and without health there can be no beauty, but seeing you was such a pleasant surprise, I dare say it has given color to my cheek. Dear Bertram," continued she, pressing the hand with which he had lifted her own to his lips, "I never expected to see you more, you have been away such a long time, I feared that baby would be all that was left you on your return."

As she spoke, she looked towards the snowy bed whereon lay a little girl in rosy sleep. "These people are very kind to her and she is beginning to speak their language, but they are not fit persons for her to be left alone with."

The words were spoken in broken sentences as if it cost her an effort to speak, which she would fain conceal.

"Fear not," said he, "she shall not be left with them, and as to the time I have been away, it is not long, considering what I went to accomplish, but I might better have stayed here than be spending my money for such a purpose. I find the account given by Morrison of your mother's religious craze was too

true ; the old house at Leith is sold, and the servants dispersed to other situations, not the slightest acknowledgment being left to any one of them for their long and faithful services. To Robert, who was either infected with her own religious views, or thought it his interest to affect being so, she has left ten thousand pounds ; the rest, a fortune in money alone of fifty thousand pounds, besides the landed property which must be sold for an immense sum, all goes to aid the cause of African missions ! Her executors are the board of directors of African missions, and every farthing of funded money and bank stock has been raised and invested by them. The old house at Leith has been converted into a distillery, the shrubbery and gardens filled with barrels and lumber of all sorts. The grand old trees in the shrubbery are alone standing to tell what it once was." His conscience never once reproached him while he lied so glibly ; just three weeks previous, he had seen Lady Gordon apparently in better health than she had known for years, and while he spoke he believed she was on her way to search out her daughter's grave in distant India, but he had told his wife fully a year before, that her mother was dead, and he believed the mental torture he was now inflicting would hasten her own death, a consummation he most earnestly wished.

"Oh do not tell me more," gasped the poor woman to whom he lied with so little mercy.

"I must tell you all I have seen and heard," said

he, "you begged of me to go and learn the truth, and you must now hear it; nay, you not only urged me to go myself, but you indulged in the most violent sorrow because I would not agree to your going with me, a paralyzed woman with literally one half of her body fit only for the grave, at an expense that if I had sold my last coat, I could not have paid for; had I brought you to Edinburgh, when I arrived there I would not have had enough to pay for a house to shelter you, or to buy you a dinner."

"Oh Bertram," exclaimed she, while the tears ran down her pale cheeks like rain, "were I once more in Edinburgh, I would find plenty of food and shelter, even although my dear mother is dead and gone."

"There I must undeceive you," replied he, with a cold, cruel voice, as if he rejoiced in being able to torment the poor dying woman, "your brother has gone to the dogs with horse-racing; his estates are in trust, while he himself is somewhere on the Continent, nobody knows where, luxuriating on the two hundred a year allowed him by his trustees. Gordon of Haight, and Seaton of Thurlow, greedy old men, not contented with their own broad acres and handsome incomes, have ruined themselves by dabbling in railway stock; while your *ci-divant* lover, or I should rather say your former love, Major Seaton, has married some girl of inferior rank in Edinburgh, and gone to India with his regiment, no heaven for him you may believe, as the other officer's wives refuse to associate with his. Robert Morton thought he had

made a better spec; he married a girl whom he supposed had money, and went to London, Brougham-like, to gain fame and fortune at the English bar, but the money somehow eluded his grasp; the English do not seem to appreciate his talents, and so, beset with duns, he took to drinking, and when I passed through London a few weeks ago, I saw him there in the street, a briefless barrister with absolutely scarcely a shoe to his foot; so you see there is an end of both your old loves."

The poor stricken woman leant her pale fair head on her left hand, which alone she was able to move, saying in a low tone, as if almost heart-broken, "Oh Bertram, you know too well neither of them were loves of mine."

"If they were not your loves, they were your lovers, which comes in my opinion to much the same thing," replied he, in an angry voice.

"Tell me about my children, and whether mamma mentioned me in her will; it would be a comfort now to know she had done even this, although she did not deem it wise to provide for me," said she, lifting her eyes to his face, with a supplicating look, and slightly raising her thin left hand as if it too would beg for mercy; either look or motion would have been successful pleaders to the heart of most men, but Captain Percy's whole soul was so swallowed up in selfishness there was no mercy left.

"The children I have sent out to board, at a sum of twenty pounds each, but miserable as the pittance

is I know not where I am to obtain money to pay it, it seems as if there was nobody in the world to do anything for you all, but me; I who was formerly nobody, a mere cypher; I am now the only one the whole four of you have to depend on for a loaf of bread; The only notice taken of you in your mother's will was, that she had given you more than you deserved, and she believed, more than you wished, as since your marriage you had never asked her for even a hundred pounds; you see what I often told you has come to pass, you would not make your needs known to her, and she naturally concluded you either did not require, or scorned her assistance."

The poor stricken woman again leant on her hand and sobbed out in her misery, "mamma, mamma, why could you not read my heart better? Oh that I could have seen you but for one hour, and been able to ask your love and forgiveness ere your death."

"There is no use whimpering over it now," said Captain Percy, striking his outstretched legs with his handkerchief, which he had evidently taken from his pocket for the purpose, "You know well your mother was never a favorite of mine; even before our marriage it was with difficulty I could conceal my opinion of her character, afterwards the more I knew of her the more I disliked her; I never knew a woman I disliked more or respected less, but in this, she was right, what is not worth asking, particularly from a mother may with justice be supposed to be an unwelcome gift, there is perhaps nothing more

galling, than to give (even out of our abundance) what is slighted or for aught we know may be scorned, you are aware that the terms in which you thanked your mother for her penuriously bestowed gifts were such as to be easily construed into a wish on your part that they might be discontinued; between you both, you have left me in a pretty predicament, four useless people to feed and clothe while the means of doing either are scant enough."

He paused, throwing himself back in his chair with the air of an injured man weary of his subject, while the poor frail being before him sobbed as if her weak body must give way under the violence of the emotion which consumed her soul.

"Oh! Bertram, spare me, spare me," she exclaimed, trying to lean towards him, "It is impossible I could live long like this," as she spoke, placing her poor white left hand first on one paralyzed limb and then on the other, "and perhaps God in His goodness will take the little ones too; there must be some terrible mistake, mamma always told me that although the money would be tied up, yet all she had would be mine, and even the last day I saw her," as she spoke the reminiscences her words called up seemed completely to overcome her and to take away the power of speech. Some minutes passed ere it was possible for her to utter in words the sad memories that were breaking her heart; at length she resumed; "Mamma tried then to make me promise that at her death, should it take place previous to our return from India, we

would at once come home and live in the old house ; I could not promise this, because I knew how much you hated Scotland and everything Scotch, oh that I had known it years before, but I said what I then never doubted that I was sure you would keep your promise of sending me home at the end of two years, and I felt strong in the faith that she would be the first to welcome me ; oh that I had obeyed the impulse so strong upon me that day, and stayed at home with my mother in the house where I was bred and born, oh ! mamma, why did you not speak one——”

Tears choked her utterance ; her whole body shook as if she had an ague fit, while the unworthy man she called husband looked with callous heart and iron brow on the misery which he and he alone had caused ; he waited until the tears only fell one by one and then coolly said :

“I see you have not forgotten your old trick of fancying yourself a martyr, you are thoroughly Scotch in that at all events ; you complain I come so seldom to see you, and yet when I do come, you treat me to a dish of tears seasoned with reproaches which I neither understand nor deserve ; good-bye, when I come again six months hence, I suppose I will have the pleasure of paying for your own and your child’s board, as I must do to-day ; good-bye.”

As he spoke, he put on his fur cap, pulled it firmly down over his ears, and strode from the room, banging the door in his exit.

“Bertram, Bertram, come back for one moment,” she cried beseechingly.

He half-opened the door, and putting in his head, said curtly, "What do you want?"

"Oh Bertram, take me away from this place, and put me among people whose language I understand."

"Certainly," was the quiet reply, "If you can tell me where I will find the money to do so."

"I do not wish to cause more expense than I now do, I dare say, poor as the place is, it costs quite as much as you can afford, but it is at times so oppressive, the sense of utter loneliness, on and on, day after day, without ever hearing a word I can understand, or being able to make myself understood except by signs; surely there are English people who will take me on the same terms as Madam Chartroux does."

By the time his wife had finished speaking, Captain Percy had entered the room and seated himself; without removing his fur cap, he looked her coolly and determinedly in the face, as he replied in slow measured terms and in a tone of voice a little louder than his wont.

"You are entirely mistaken in supposing that an English family, however poor, would take charge of you in your present helpless state for double the sum I now pay. Your mother whom you so regret and love, left an immense fortune to Negroes and (but for me) consigned you and your children to beggary; her culpable negligence in not having you taught French, or your own laziness in refusing to learn it, cannot be laid to my charge, neither am I to blame-

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that you are doomed for the rest of your life to drag about with you a dead leg and arm ; pray point out if possible (without your usual vehemence and tears,) what you would have me to do ; if within the bounds of possibility I will endeavor to meet your wishes ; but it is useless to waste time and words in asking me to do what is impossible with my limited means. Do you imagine if I had a pound to spare I would have walked twenty miles through deep snow to pay your board and have this pleasant interview, with the prospect of walking back ere I sleep ? ”

“ Oh Bertram,” she exclaimed, pressing her hand to her bosom, “ is it possible ?—you will kill yourself, how unjust I have been.”

“ That is nothing new,” was the reply, uttered in the same cool calculating voice, “ have you anything more to say ? If I am to reach a sleeping place by midnight it is time I was off.”

“ Dear Bertram, do stay and sleep in my little bed, Madame Chartreux will take baby and I shall sleep in this chair ; I often do.”

“ It seems to have entirely escaped your memory,” replied he with a sarcastic repellant air, “ that I am a hired clerk working for a master ; my wages going to support a wife, one half of whose body is fit only for the grave and her three children, and that two months of this year have been spent in a fruitless visit to my wife’s country at her request ; Mrs. Percy you ought to have married a gentleman of leisure, good bye.” So saying he bowed with the formality he

would have used to a perfect stranger, walked from the room and closed the door.

On Captain Percy's leaving his wife's room, he found the old people seated by the stove, just as he left them, and sitting down, pulled out his purse, and paid Madame Chartreux in one dollar bills for the board of his wife and child during the last six months, at the rate of ten dollars a month. He handed her the money in silence, which was received by the woman in like manner and handed to her husband, he in his turn on receiving the money counted it and going to the further end of the apartment locked it in a cupboard which was fastened both to the floor and the wall.

Captain Percy rose as if about to depart, when the woman motioned him to be seated; saying as she did so, "We cannot keep your sister any longer unless you pay her board before-hand, we would not have kept her so long as we have done, because we are poor and are not able to do justice to her or ourselves unless we have money to buy her necessaries, but the weather has been so severe for two months back we knew it would have killed her had we brought her into Montreal."

His heart gave a sudden start at the danger he would have incurred had they carried their threat into execution.

"I have been in Europe for some months back," replied he; "besides I never expected she would have been alive until now, and hence that you would have

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received the money which I placed in the hands of Monsieur le Curé to repay you for the trouble you will necessarily have in attending on her deathbed. You know I explained to you before, that you had only to go to Monsieur le Curé when she is dead, and he will pay you one hundred dollars to pay for the interment of the body."

"Well," replied the woman, "it is a great deal of money, but it would be better for you to give a part of it every month to buy some nice things for her to eat; she will not trouble you long; I do not think she would be alive now, were it not for the good care I have taken of her, and these last six months I was not able to do what I could wish, because I was often without ready money to buy either tea or sugar, and it is easily seen a lady like her has been accustomed to that all her life."

"Oh, as to that," said he, "if you give her the soup you have for yourselves, I am sure she will be quite pleased with it; she did not complain to me of having missed her tea."

"That may be, I do not think she is of a complaining nature, she is always sweet and pleasant, but at odd times I have tried her with our soup when we have had nothing else to give, and when it was set before her she would eat one or two spoonfuls, and then shaking her head sadly, put it from her; but the little girl," continued the woman in a cheerful tone, "would eat anything, she is a true Canadian. Even if her mother were dead, we would like to keep the little girl."

"Then you shall do so," said Captain Percy.

"Yes," said the old man, "we would not like to part with her at all, she is the life of the whole house, I do not think her poor mother could have lived, but for her, and every day she is becoming more interesting with her little sharp ways."

"However," said the woman, who appeared to fear Captain Percy would again go away without paying the board before-hand, "we cannot keep the one or the other, unless the board is paid in advance. Had you not come now, I would, certainly, the first mild day, have taken her into one of the English priests in Montreal and left her with him."

This was a consummation of all things to be dreaded, and he hastily assured the woman that the board would be paid regularly in advance, adding, "I will pay a portion of it at present. Shall I pay you for three months? Do you think it is likely she will live so long? You know you will receive one hundred dollars when she dies."

"I know that very well, but we are not going to kill her and jeopardy our souls for a hundred dollars, or ten times that much," replied the woman, indignantly—"How can I know how long she will live? I am not the good God who can tell the time allotted to the lives of each of His creatures."

Captain Percy stared rather blankly; he saw that he had overstepped the limits of prudence, and that while wishing to excite the cupidity of the woman, he had unveiled his own desire for the speedy death

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of the poor invalid. Counting out another handful of bills to pay for three months in advance, he departed, resuming his moody walk towards the high road from which he had descended into the bush.

"I have got myself into a pretty mess," he soliloquised, "it is truly, as the saints say—'The devil helps us into the ditch and leaves us there.' I have made a false move this time, that is clear, yet who could have thought that Tiny, with half her body paralyzed, could have lived one-third the time she has done. Every doctor who ever prescribed for her, assured me she could not live three months, and here she is alive yet. Some people have the tenacity of life belonging to cats; if the doctrine of the transmigration of souls be true, it is very likely her mother was a cat some sixty years ago. But the question with me now is, what is to be done? I do not pay a great sum, to be sure, to these people, but I do not wish to be coming to this confounded place every six months, and I dare not run the risk of its being found out who she really is, and this might happen any moment, were she to come in contact with one who speaks English. However, here there is not much fear of that. These old people down in the bush, live an isolated life, and she cannot live much longer. To-day she looked as surely dead as if she were shrouded in her grave; I wish she had been so."

He strode on in the same mood until within a short distance of the village, where he came upon a peasant with his two sons, who at the door of an

open barn, were engaged in skinning the body of a horse. At another time he would have passed by such a thing unheedingly, but he was worn out with fatigue in walking through the deep snow; he had tasted nothing since the brandy he drank in the morning, and feeling much need of repose walked into the barn in order that he might rest himself for a few minutes.

"What are you occupied about, my man?" said he addressing the peasant, "What has happened to your horse?"

"I know not," said the man; "last night he was well and hearty, this morning he drank but would not eat, and half an hour ago I found him dead."

"That is the way my friend," said Captain Percy; "our animals whom we would fain keep, die and leave us, while our useless friends whom we have to feed for nothing, stick by us as if they had a hundred lives."

"That is true," said the man, "and I have had a hard lot of it with my cattle. In the twelve years I have been here, I have lost fourteen horses and ten cows."

"Why that is an extraordinary thing," said Captain Percy, "there must be something wrong with your land, there must be some poisonous herb in your grass."

"Ah no," said the man, "it is my bad chance, my predecessor never lost a horse or a cow that I know

of. I have had my land twice blessed by the priest, but it makes no difference."

"And do you believe the priest has any power in such things?" asked his guest.

"I know he has no power over my cattle, or to send me good luck," said the *habitant*. "I have a payment of a hundred dollars to make on my farm in a few weeks. I depended on the sale of this horse for doing so; I refused ninety dollars for him last week, and now all he is worth to me is what I can get for the skin."

Captain Percy felt interested. This man might be less scrupulous than the people down in the bush, and were he to place Mrs. Percy in his charge, she might be neglected for a few days, and the man receive money to pay the debt on his farm now staring him in the face.

"I should like to speak to you in your own house and alone," said he, "I will therefore wait till you have completed your present labor, and go with you."

To this proposition, the farmer readily assented, and in a short time led the way towards his dwelling; when they entered the house, the family were all gathered in the kitchen, ready for supper. Captain Percy saw at a glance, that the poor man who had just lost his horse, had something over a round dozen mouths to feed, besides a family of ten children and his wife, there was an old grandmother, who appeared verging on a hundred years. The farmer, notwithstanding his recent loss, hospitably

invited Captain Percy to share their frugal meal ; this he refused to do, with the suavity he knew so well how to assume, but requested that the farmer might at once see him alone on the business he spoke of, as he wished to reach Montreal as quickly as possible.

Joinnette, such was the *habitant's* name, led the way into an adjoining apartment, saying to his wife, "Rose, come and hear what the gentleman has to say."

Captain Percy knew too well the influence which French Canadian women hold over their husbands to make any objection to this proposition, and stepped aside, that the farmer's wife might enter before him, an attention he knew the poorest Frenchwoman expects and appreciates.

"Do you speak English?" was the first question Captain Percy asked, addressing the farmer and his wife in common.

"No," was the answer he received, simultaneously given by both.

This was the answer he expected and wished to receive.

"I suppose you are poor, and would be glad to receive such help as would enable you to pay the sum you are now due upon your land."

"We would be very glad of that," said the woman, "I dont know what will become of us unless in some way or other we meet the payment. If we cannot do so, we will have to leave this place that we have

toiled so hard to keep, and where our children have been born ; my husband has planted several orchards, in two or three years they will be in full bearing, and will be a source of great wealth, it seems hard that we should lose all this, because we are unable to meet a payment of one poor hundred dollars."

"Well," said Captain Percy, "perhaps I can put it in your power to gain as much in a short time."

The farmer and his wife looked in each other's faces as if they would there read what the stranger's meaning could be, but neither of them spoke, waiting for Captain Percy to explain his meaning.

"I have a sick relative," said he, "whom I wish to board in a place like this, and I will give you a reasonable payment for the same, she is paralyzed, and the doctors tell me it is impossible for her to live over a few weeks ; you see she will not trouble you long. I will myself pay all her funeral expenses, and I will give you," added he, addressing himself to madam, "in addition to her board, a hundred dollars, to pay for the trouble of having a death and burial in your house, and this sum will be paid down to you in gold on the day of her interment."

Madam here abruptly inquired, "What relation is the lady to you ?"

"She is my sister," replied he, "a poor delicate woman, her constitution was always feeble even before she was paralyzed, it is probable the mere exertion of driving here in this cold weather will hasten her death, so that she may not trouble you

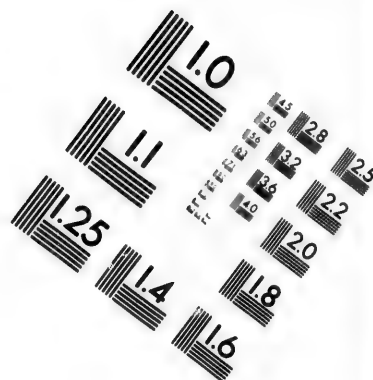
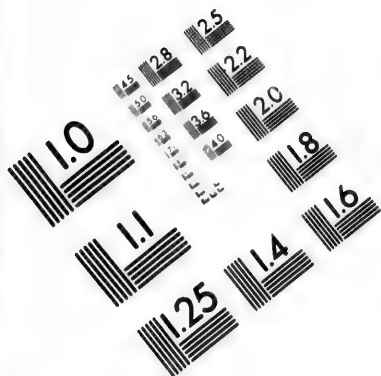
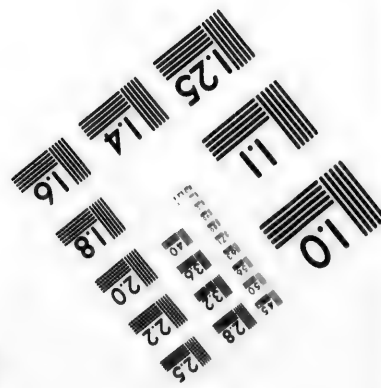
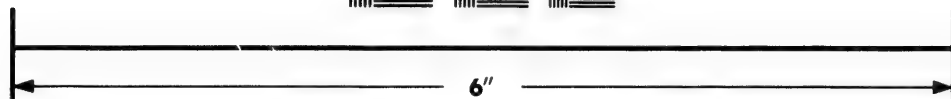
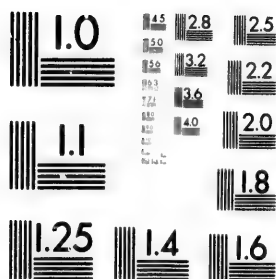


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many days. I will pay her board by the month in advance, and should she not live a week you will have the month's board and a hundred dollars in gold for your trouble "

There was no answer, the faces of both expressed surprise more than any other emotion ; it was evident they must be better informed as to his meaning (and he fancied from the review he took of his own soul) perhaps a larger bribe offered, and he added speaking slowly lest his Parisian French might not be properly understood by the Canadian *habitant*.

" I live in New York ; I have a very particular reason for wishing to be there on the tenth of this month ; to-day is the first, I will bring my sister here to-morrow, and if you can manage to have the funeral on the seventh, I can then leave Canada on the eighth, after settling all the bills, so that my returning here again is unnecessary. I will make the sum one hundred and fifty dollars in gold ; there is no violence needed, all you have to do is to leave her alone ; she cannot move from the place you lay her down ; you run no risk ; you save your farm ; and have still fifty dollars to buy another horse."

The farmer took out his handkerchief and wiped off the big drops of perspiration which stood on his face. " Oh Rose," exclaimed he to his wife in a horrified voice, while she on her part, with her tall portly figure drawn up to its full height, and arms crossed on her large bosom looked down with offended dignity from the height of her integrity and poverty

on the contemptible worm whom they both knew was tempting them there, even as the old serpent tempted our first parents in the Paradise of God.

Madame was the first to speak. "I would not take your sister into my house and let her die by neglect or ill-treatment, if my children and myself were to be cast out of the farm to-morrow morning. May our ever blessed Notre Dame des Neiges and St. Francois Xavier aid your sister in life and help her in death; I fear she will get little help or aid from you."

"Oh Rose, do not speak that way," said the farmer; the natural politeness of his race deprecating the idea of insulting a stranger who was their guest.

Captain Percy saw he was understood, and how appreciated, and turning on his heel, had left the house ere the others, in their horror and indignation, had moved from the spot.

The old woman who had meanwhile been listening at the door of an inner apartment, joined the farmer and his wife on the departure of Captain Percy, saying, as she did so. "That man is the brother of the lady who lives down at Joseph Chartreux's house, the Indian in the bush."

"Whoever he is," replied the farmer, "he is a bad man, and surely it was the Devil who sent him here to tempt us in our need, perhaps it is the old black man himself. The boys and I were in the barn for an hour before he came up, and we did not see anything on the wide waste of snow until he stood at the door."

"Perhaps," said the old woman solemnly,

"Perhaps," echoed the children, as they had all, the whole ten of them gathered round their parents, shuddering at the thought that a fiend in human shape had been their guest a few minutes previously. They were not mistaken, they had indeed seen a fiend in human form.

On quitting Joinnette's house, Captain Percy walked quickly towards the *auberge*, where he had left his horse; he was ravenously hungry, and gross eater as he was, the interesting question of what could be had in the poor country tavern to satisfy his appetite, for the time completely occupied all his thoughts. Arrived at the inn, he demanded of the host what he could have for dinner.

This was the subject on which mine host of the Beaver Hotel loved to dilate, and at once began to enumerate all the good things he could set before the traveller, counting each separate dish on his fingers, and speaking in a brisk, pleased voice as if he was sure he had a bill of fare fit for a Prince.

"I have coffee, tea, home-made bread, eggs, pork, milk and potatoes. What will Monsieur have?"

"Have you no beef, no mutton?"

"No, Monsieur; this morning we had plenty of both; we have many customers; it is all gone; had Monsieur spoken in the morning I would have kept one little roast for him; now it is all gone."

The truth was, there had been neither beef nor

mutton within the house for a month ; the pork which they fed for themselves, being the favorite food of the Canadian *habitant*, and as for travellers or customers, as mine host designated them, they, during the seven winter months at least, consisted of peasants going to market with a few fowls, eggs, rabbits, or at rare intervals, a trapped fox, or rarer still, a pig ; such customers contenting themselves with the warmth and shelter afforded by the bar-room, in which, day and night, a large stove was kept as hot as the travellers chose to make it. The simple peasants bringing along with them a brown loaf and a chunk of pork sufficient to last until they again reached their frugal homes.

“Bring me a part of all you have got in the house, said Captain Percy, curtly ; and when the dinner appeared—coffee, milk, pork and eggs—he did ample justice to the coarse fare, notwithstanding its being so different to what he was accustomed. Supper over, he again began to cogitate with himself on his best line of action, under the perplexing circumstances in which he found himself placed.

“What am I to do ?” soliloquized he—“tied to this half-dead thing, whose life keeps me in constant hot water, besides the expense, which, with my confounded ill-luck lately, is a consideration, and yet in this country, with their sneaking, cowardly ways, it seems impossible to get rid of her. My ill-luck always follows me ; had I brought her to Spain or Italy, it would have been all over long ago, and no-

body the wiser, and I would have done so, but for Abby. Poor thing, she was so sick of the jabbering on board the French ship we sailed in from Calcutta, that I could not tempt her, by love or gold, to remain in France until my return, or go with us. I had no resource left but Lower Canada, where I knew my wife's infernal whining could not be understood. There is no help for it, I must just wait until she dies off; surely it cannot take long now, and yet I should have paid twelve months board instead of three; were it only for the peace of mind it will give me, it is better to lose a few dollars than risk having that old witch carry out her threat of bringing Tiny into Montreal, to the Protestant priest forsooth; a pretty kettle of fish he would make of it indeed, were Tiny brought into contact with, and enabled to unfold her woes to the Protestant priest of Montreal; and yet I have peppered her well with deaths and misfortunes to-day, ha, ha, ha!" and he laughed exultingly, as he thought of the ready lies which came to his lips, one after another, as he tormented the poor woman who never for a moment doubted that what he told her was God's verity.

"It would be a slight poser for her to direct his Protestant reverence where, and to whom, a letter of complaint was to be addressed."

He pulled out his watch, and on opening it, gave a start of pleased surprise. "Ha, it is only six o'clock; this day has been such a cursed long one, I thought it must have been verging on midnight. I shall

order my horse, I have yet time to pay the old woman her year's board; perhaps the certainty that she has a year's board in her hands, and will have a hundred dollars to pay her trouble, may make the old witch have less compunction about shortening the term of Miss Tiny's natural life."

"Heigh-ho!" added he with a half sigh, "I wonder what Abby is doing, most likely making her bright black eyes snow-blind, gazing along the moon-shiney tin roofs and snow-fields to see if she can discern the *voiture* containing my unworthy self, returning down the mountain path; had I only enough cash, we might live a jolly life, between shooting in winter, and fishing in summer in this cold Canada, aye and make it pay pretty well too. I have seen skins sold here for a dollar and a half, that would bring four times that price in worn out Europe."

In a few minutes he was in his sleigh, skimming lightly along over the hard snowy surface. He stayed his horse at the entrance to the bush, and leading him a little off the high road, fastened him to a tree growing by the gable end of a ruined cottage, in such a way that the shadow of the wall thrown by the bright moon, effectually concealed the horse and carriage from any one passing on the road above, if such an unlikely thing should happen as a traveller passing this lonely place at such a late hour.

Having done this, he plunged down into the path he had traversed in the morning. The air was milder than it had been then, he himself fortified by food as

well as another glass of brandy; besides he had to exert himself, lest the Indian and his squaw should be in bed ere his arrival. He gained the cottage in almost half the time it had taken him in the morning, and lifting the latch, he held up his finger as he entered, to enjoin silence on the Indians.

"Since I left you in the morning," said he, "I have found that most likely I cannot return for nearly a year, and I have come back to pay you a year's board in advance, so that you may not be at any loss how to act in my absence," so saying, he counted out the bills and placed them in the woman's hand, adding, "I will not disturb my sister by going to see her again, it is late, she is probably asleep."

"No," said the old woman, "nor is it likely she will be to-night, if she continues weeping as she has done since you left her."

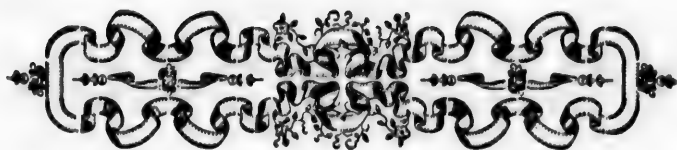
"Ah," said he, putting on a sad, serious air, "this is always the case; whenever I leave her, she spends the rest of the day in tears."

"Yes," said the woman, "I observed when you brought her here, it was so, but now she seems to me to have the face of one whose every hope on earth was gone. Poor lady, it would be well if the good God would take her to Himself, and so young and beautiful; it was a sorrowful chance that took her mother from the earth and left her here in such sickness and sorrow, but I suppose the saints know what is best for us all."

"No doubt," said Captain Percy, bending his head

solemnly, that the Indian woman might see how devout he was, as he walked again into the broad moonlight. In another hour, he was seated in his sleigh driving rapidly along through St. Martins, by the Bord-a-Plouff across the Lachapelle bridge towards Montreal.





CHAPTER XI.

THE bright sun rising in the East, his chariot rolling in clouds of amber and gold, the soft dew of Heaven lying on the grass, the rose-tipped gowan opening her breast that the honey bee may feed there ; the lark singing her song of praise, soaring and singing ; the river running clear and calm, and cool, in its quiet happiness, to pour its loving tribute into the bosom of the great sea, all joyous things on earth, as it were wishing long life and happiness to sweet Mary Seaton on her bridal morn ; this happiness had been long delayed, but it was come at last, she had been the affianced bride of William Hamilton for eight long years ; her lover was a companion in arms of her brother Hugh, and like him, brave, upright and true ; more fortunate than Hugh Seaton, the chosen of his heart loved him dearly, and if fate had willed it so, would have "gone maiden mild" all the days of her life, and counted it naught, for the love she bore to William Hamilton, or what would have been in the eyes of the world, a much greater sacrifice, married him when he was only a poor soldier of fortune ; but Seaton of Thurlow was a thoroughly practical man, and would never have given his consent to his daughter's marriage with

one whose means were not amply adequate to surround her with the same ease and luxury as his own broad acres enabled himself to do.

In all those long years of waiting, the faith which Colonel Hamilton and Mary Seaton had, the one in the other, never knew change or wavering, and so what would have seemed long years to another, to them seemed as one day. Now, all was changed. William Hamilton was, by the death of his uncle, a Baronet, and the owner of lands, richer and broader than those of Thurlow, and while old Lady Hamilton sat weeping for her lord, in the Castle Hall, allotted her as a jointer house, the event which made her a lonely woman, brought joy and gladness to Mary Seaton.

It is ever thus, in life as in death, that which bringeth light and gladness to one, causeth crushing sorrow, or fearfulness of heart to another, in every phase of life it is the old story; Rachel rejoiceth, she hath borne a son, "God hath taken away my reproach, the Lord shall add to me another son." Leah mourneth, "Now will my husband be indeed estranged from me."

With Sir William Hamilton came Major Seaton to share in the marriage festivities and bid good bye ere the regiment into which he had by his own wish been exchanged, departed for Canada.

They arrived in the early morn; the marriage was not to take place until noon, and after breakfast which at Thurlow was served at eight o'clock, the bride putting her arm within that of her elder brother

passed through the glass door leading to the side lawn, and hence to a shady walk where the lilac with its fragrant bunches of purple flowers and Laburnum weighed down by its rich golden blossoms met over head; green mossy grass under foot; the curling Lady Fern all around.

"I have brought you here dear Hugh," and she pressed the arm on which she leant, "that we might spend an hour together, ere I take my new name, and go to my new home; I have so longed to be able to talk with you alone, and since you came from India, it seemed so impossible; Flora and Blanche would come and interrupt what I wished to be an hour of sweet confidence, such as we used to have in the happy days when we were in our teens, and the other girls both at school; to-day I know they will not follow us, they are busy with our guests, besides their own kindly hearts will accord to me to-day whatever they think will add to my happiness, and in this green grove where we played away so many of the happiest hours of our childhood, and in our girl and boyhood took sweet counsel together; I want to say all I blame myself for not having said long ago."

Major Seaton leant forward so as to look into his sister's face, saying in a gay tone, "What does Mary Seaton wish to say? I can almost prophecy it is nothing that relates to the welfare or happiness of the future Lady Hamilton; that I can easily see, is deemed as sure as anything under the firmament of

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heaven; it is about brother Hugh you want to speak; now tell me unreservedly all you wish to say."

"You are right, Hugh," was the reply, as she placed her cheek lovingly close to his shoulder, "for the present all is bright sunshine with me, and even for the unknown future as far as I can look into it, there is no shadow up or down the road; but dear Hugh, I want you to be as happy as myself; I want you to forget all the past that we used to speak about so often; I want you to seek and find some one of your own to pet, some one who will love you as I love William, with no romantic nonsense of adoration and the like, but with the honest true love that a good woman, loving you for yourself alone, will delight to bestow on such a man as you; I do not think that men can judge of each other as we can; indeed, indeed Hugh, there are few men, who deserve to be loved as you do, few who could excite such a strong enduring love, you so single hearted, generous and true, and so handsome too, Hugh," she added naively, looking in his face.

He made no answer, and after a pause, she again said, "Did you observe Lady Blanche Berresford at breakfast?" Still no answer, and she resumed "She is one of the sweetest girls I ever knew; she has never mixed in the fashionable world whose teaching you dread so much, she is well informed without being a blue; she sings our own songs with the same sweet low voice you used to admire. She is the friend of the poor or oppressed, from a distressed

fellow creature down to a little kitten. She has long ago left behind 'sweet sixteen' that you despise, and yet she is more mild and guileless than 'sweet sixteen' often is; every one of the twenty-five years she has passed on earth will each in its way bear testimony of good from the recording angel."

"Stop, Mary," and her brother laughed as he spoke, "you are making Lady Blanche better than yourself, and as Sir William's friend, I cannot allow this, particularly as you are the older of the two, by three years; if Sir Duncan had not died, you would soon have been an old maid, but you in enumerating the young lady's good qualities have forgotten the most attractive in the eyes of men; she is a beautiful woman, and yet so seemingly unconscious of the fact, so bashful and girl-like that instead of twenty-five, I fancied her eighteen. She will be a Countess in her own right, and will have ten thousand pounds a year; think you my dear sister, of the ladder you would have me scale, as well might I 'love some bright particular star, and seek to wed it.' You would promise that Lady Blanche and I are both, at least, 'short witted'; I to presume to lift my eyes to such 'beauty and fortune,' and she, on her part, to marry a poor soldier like me, with little else than his sword; only your own happiness must have turned your head; do you think, my dear sister, that if I were really the Adonis in other women's eyes, you would have me to be, and my fortune was such as to enable me to ask Lady Blanche's hand, on anything like

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equal terms, is it at all likely such a beautiful woman with the cultivated mind and heart you describe, is fancy free? Ah no, were my vanity to lead me on until I laid my heart and hand at her feet, I would merely do so to hear her give me the reply in the old ballad, 'I'm promised awa.' "

"There, Hugh, you are quite mistaken, she has been my most intimate friend for six years, in all that time, I have never known her to pay more regard to the attentions forced on her, by, I must say, a numerous train of suitors, than to show them that as friends they were welcome, as lovers they were repelled; I have more than once heard her mother say, 'My dear Blanche, your manner is so repelling towards young men, I fear you will remain an old maid.' Her answer invariably being, 'Mamma, old maidism has no terrors for me, I am well with you,' or some such expression.' "

"My dear Mary," said he, "in your love and admiration of your friend, you have quite forgotten my feelings; with such a beau-killer I would have no chance; the only position I could possibly hope to attain, would be the unenviable one of having my name placed on the list of her refusals."

"Oh Hugh, do not trifle in this nonsensical way," said his sister in a grieved voice, "I know too much of your heart's inmost desire; too much of all you suffered in the long ago, to be deceived by such folly. Poor Tiny is now as dead to us all, as she was to you many years since; time must have healed that sore place in

your heart, and now dearest Hugh, I will not have you leading the lonely life you do, when I feel almost sure that such dear happiness is within your grasp; dear Hugh, listen to me; I once expostulated with Lady Blanche on her refusal of one who was my dear friend, a titled, wealthy man, whose mind was in true affinity with her own; her reply was, 'I shall never marry unless I find one who is in all respects such as I desire;' if the closest intimacy during six years in which she withheld from me no secret of her heart, enables me to judge what bent her taste and affections will take, you, dear Hugh, have every quality of mind and heart to win Blanche Berresford. This morning, I asked her at breakfast, what she thought of my brother Hugh, I would not have asked this question so prematurely had I not seen her watching you with a look of more than ordinary interest while you were speaking to Mr. Scott of that frightful night at Delhi, when his nephew was killed; her reply was, 'you have certainly not in your picture of him overdrawn his outward attractions, he has, I think, the handsomest face I have ever seen, an eloquent and elegant speaker too, and best of all, not one word of *I, me* and *mine*, which we hear so constantly dilated on by most men, he might have been well excused for saying *I*, but he did not even say *we*, yet his conduct on that memorable night, is part of the great history of our land, even—she stopped abruptly, as if she had said more than she ought to have done, and turned with a crimsoned cheek, to address deaf Sir Duncan Grant."

Without answering, Major Seaton led his sister to a little mossy knoll which used to be the favorite resting place in their toilsome play in the blythe old time passed away for ever; gently seating her, he placed himself so that he might encircle her neck with his arm, and at the same time, see her face; after a pause of a few seconds, looking in her eyes, he said:

"Mary, you alluded to a subject which we agreed long ago should never be mentioned by either of us, yet painful as are the memories Tiny Gordon's name call up, I am glad you have done so; you know she was my first love, in my boyhood, when I used to swing you both together in the old swing between those trees," pointing as he spoke, to two great elms seen through an opening in the laburnums, 'you know that after she was a wife, she was dearer to me than many a woman is to her bridegroom, but you cannot know how deeply I loved her when there was a great gulf placed between us forever; you cannot know how that love grew and grew when I looked upon the pale sad face of Captain Percy's wife trying to hide her misery under such sad smiles, assuming a gait and aspect of composure while her heart was throbbing with anxiety and unrest; you cannot know the pains I took to obtain an ascendancy over that low villain whom she called husband, trying for her dear sake to make him walk in the paths of integrity and truth, trying to make him understand that it was his true interest to be if

possible, what he would fain appear, a man and a gentleman; and how, as I came day by day, and week after week, to know him better and better, the conviction forced itself upon me that all such attempts were perfectly useless the cur was so innately deceitful and grovelling in his own sordid nature, he could not by any possibility be made to realize the fact that he was in the midst of men who chose the right against the wrong, fearless of consequences; he was of the earth, earthy, it was in vain trying to make the bat soar towards the sun with the strong wings and sight of the eagle, the Ethiopian cannot change his skin. You know the rest; I could not remain in Scotland to see Tiny pining away with the 'hope deferred which maketh the heart sick,' when I returned I was met by the tidings that she was laid in her grave; and now dear Mary, as far as this world goes, 'it is better for her despairing than aught in this wide world beside,' but thank God, there is a brighter side, a land where we shall all meet again, where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage; perhaps Tiny is there."

"Yes dear Hugh, we know she is there."

"I am not by any means sure of that, I cannot understand that such a strong faith in Tiny's being still alive would have come to Lady Gordon, and lasted until she closed her eyes in death, unless it was the truth; God has many mysteries which we do not understand as yet, it is to me less wonderful that such knowledge should be given to a loving

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mother, than that by the power of lightning, you and I, can in a few minutes, communicate with our friends in India."

"Hugh," she exclaimed in astonishment, "Do my ears deceive me? *you* believe in the supernatural! is Saul among the Prophets? we will allow for the sake of argument that such a thing is possible; do you think it at all probable that such a crime could be committed and remain undetected in the nineteenth century?"

"Yes, we can commit the same crimes in the nineteenth century, with all its boasted light and refinement, as our fore-fathers perpetrated four hundred years ago; the only thing which staggers me, as I have thought the matter over and over, almost all my waking hours, since I became aware of the circumstances, is, what possible object he could have had in view; it is true, we know now, he is married to another, and a sensual unscrupulous man like Captain Percy will stop at nothing to obtain the object of his desire, when he is in love, and certainly there would be less absolute crime in concealing his wife in the wild bush lands of Canada, than in imbruing his hands in her blood, besides he could not kill her, he is the veriest coward I ever knew, and so superstitious that I have seen him turn pale with fear, and unable to move hand or foot, by a ghost trick on All Souls Eve. Captain Percy is a reckless man, but he is at once covetous and extravagant, and in reporting his wife as dead, he lost forever, the large sums Lady

Gordon yearly sent her daughter; he must have known she only endured him for the love she had for Tiny, and with her death such remittances would cease; this is the only thing which undermines my faith in Tiny's being yet alive, but dear Mary, we have talked long enough on this sad theme. This day is, I trust, the beginning of new happiness as well as the beginning of a new life to you, and we must not cloud its morning by a retrospective review of the saddest story belonging to our kith and kin. We will now go home, it will soon be time for you to seek the aid of your tire woman, that she may adorn you for your bridal; may every blessing attend you; one word more, my dearest sister, my boyhood's playmate, the friend and *confidante* of my youth, never speak to me in this way again of Lady Blanche or any other lady, if you love me as you used to do."

The brother and sister walked in silence, hand in hand, up to the Hall, ascending the grassy slope, towards a postern door, in a wing of the building which contained the young ladies' apartments.

Major Seaton pressed his lips to his sister's cheek as he handed her inside, he himself retracing his steps towards the laburnum covered walk, that alone there, he might calm down the troubled thoughts which his conversation with Miss Seaton had given rise to.

Alas our poor human nature; man born to trouble as the sparks fly upward; who that saw the firm step, the

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penetrating intellectual eye, the pleasant smile, could ever imagine that beneath this calm exterior, lay—a waste of waters—a tideless sea—death in life—the on coming years rolling their silent waves over the by-gone trouble—only a drear out looking—a hope long delayed, a wish he may not pray—a wearyful prayer for patience—how many of us have such stricken hearts, yet to all, God's sweet comfort cometh from the far-off land, telling of a clear day, and bearing a promise of peace and life when the waters have passed away.

It was a grand bridal in the house where the Seatons of Thurlow had dwelt for centuries, and although with the exception of the first bridesmaid, Lady Blanche Berresford, all the guests claimed kindred to either bride or bridegroom, yet the large old mansion was crowded in every corner, and when all were assembled in the grand-drawing-room, (a room only used on account of its great size for occasions of high festival,) it seemed a matter of doubt whether a passage could be made sufficiently wide to admit of the bride and her maidens passing to the upper end of the room, where on the dais, the clergyman, the bridegroom, his groomsmen, and the nearest relatives of the bride and bridegroom were already waiting their appearance to commence the ceremony; however, when at last the bride was led up by her father, her six bridemaids following in her train, not a fold of the soft white satin dress, nor of the lace veil which enveloped her like a cloud was ruffled.

Lady Blanche stood opposite Major Seaton, and impelled perhaps by the conversation of the morning, he regarded her with more interest than he was accustomed to bestow on any face however fair; their eyes met, while his were intensely fixed upon her, the deep blush which overspread her face and neck, on observing the earnest gaze with which she was regarded, the dark eye lashes which almost lay on her cheek as she cast down her eyes that she might avoid his glance, her slight girlish figure and pale hair, according so well with the simple white muslin dress without ornament, in which she was attired, forming a picture so different from all by whom she was surrounded, elicited from her observer the mental exclamation, 'how beautiful!' and as he still continued to gaze, unconscious of the pain he occasioned to the object of his admiration, his second thoughts were 'how like Tiny!' not the pale sad Tiny he last saw, but the beautiful child and graceful girl he remembered so well and loved so dearly in every phase of his life, in the long past; she who together with his sister Mary and himself had passed so many sunny summer hours beneath those elms, which looking through the window, beside which Lady Blanche stood, he could see slowly waving their long drooping branches to and fro, as if they too felt a solemn trouble, and moaned for the beautiful whose feet would never again press the grass beneath their shade.

It was no fancied resemblance, Lady Blanche in-

deed looked and moved like Tiny, and moreover, when she spoke or sung, her voice was low and sweet like Tiny's; Mary Seaton was well aware of the resemblance, but she named it not in her converse with her brother, she had reserved this which she was sure would be observed as a *coup-de-main* to gain his heart by the force of old associations. She had miscalculated sadly; every grace and motion, every sweet sound that spoke of Tiny, only stirred the old thoughts that hung about his heart, as a light wind will stir the withered leaves which many storms have been unable to tear away.

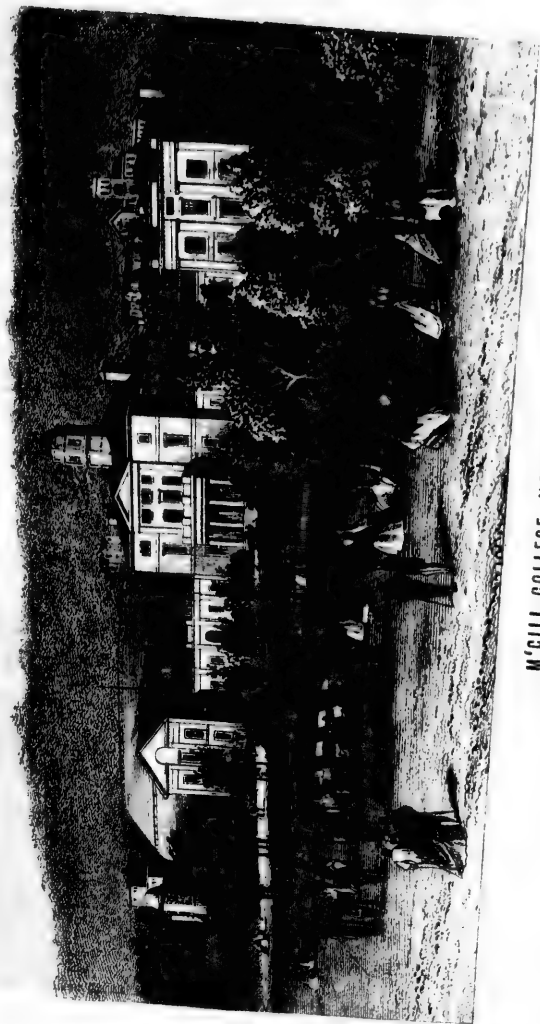
Major Seaton was startled from his reverie by the solemn words, "Whom God hath joined let no man put asunder;" there was no Mary Seaton now, those last words had made her Mary Hamilton for life, for death, and good and true as the man was they had given her to, those words fell with a sad sound little short of a funeral knell on the heart of her parents, they had now resigned for evermore into the charge and keeping of another, she whom God had given to them, and their son Hugh's heart felt as if a sharp sword had pierced it through; the last time he heard those words, one dearer to him than sister ever was, had thrown aside her maiden gladness, and had taken up a life which was henceforth to be marked by a quickly beating heart, a wearyful unrest, and for what? for the shadow of a shade!



CHAPTER XII.

WHE, that is Mrs. Campbell, her children, Sandy Mitchell and myself started from Portland for Montreal, at an early hour. I was very pleased to find that Sandy had made an arrangement with Mrs. Campbell to go to her daughter's farm which was in the vicinity of Montreal, and work there for at least some weeks after his arrival; this would give him time, as he said himself, to look out for a situation without incurring the expense of paying for his board; to me it had another good feature, Mrs Campbell described her son-in-law as being a steady, industrious man, and a cheerful, happy fellow, who kept all around him in good humor. Such a companion would be invaluable to Sandy; with his proclivities, going into a boarding-house, such as he could pay for, would have been most dangerous, and in this arrangement I saw an answer to his father's prayers.

The two clergymen who were our *companions de voyage* on board the steamer, were also to accompany us to Montreal, and as I entered the cars, Doctor Leatherhead politely arranged the seat in front of the one he was seated in, and asked me to occupy it;



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this attention took me a little by surprise, as although he and I were quite good friends for the first two or three days of the voyage, yet I could not forget that after the other ladies made their appearance, he contented himself with bidding me good morning, or at most, a remark on the wind or sunshine, as he passed me by, in pacing the deck.

Just as the train was about starting, a lady passed the compartment where I sat, carrying an umbrella, a shawl, a band-box and rather large basket, and immediately following her, a gentleman, who carried himself; they were rather conspicuous from the fact of the cars being very much crowded, in consequence of which they found it difficult to obtain a seat, particularly the lady with her various bundles, but at last, by the aid of the Conductor, who insisted on some others who had made themselves comfortable, on rather an extensive scale, sitting more closely, they obtained a seat a little way down, exactly in front of where I sat. I was rather uneasy when I saw the new comers were Captain and Mrs. Percy. I knew the determination with which Captain Percy had resisted Lady Gordon's wish to have her daughter's body disinterred and brought from India, her purpose in going there having been so represented to him by Mr. Morton; his subsequent agreement to give all facilities in his power for procuring the body, were worth nothing now, when we knew that Mrs. Percy was buried in Montreal, and his former dislike so vehemently expressed, to Lady Gordon's

going to India, evidently showed there was something to conceal; Lady Gordon had, to her dying moment, construed this into strong confirmation that her daughter yet lived; I, myself, entertained an idea that Captain Percy had a secret which the disintering of Mrs. Percy's body would divulge, and that should his wife tell him who I was, and by any means he suspect for what purpose I had come to Montreal, he would not be scrupulous in the means he might adopt to prevent me from fulfilling the vow I had made to Lady Gordon.

With such thoughts passing in my mind, it was no wonder I kept my eyes fixed on my fellow travellers; I had no means of concealment; I was seated *vis-a-vis* to them without any means of escaping their observation, and the black crape veil I had worn since Lady Gordon's death, I had most unfortunately laid aside, lest the dust of the railway cars should spoil it. For the first few minutes, they were, to my great surprise, evidently in extremely bad humor with each other, a feeling which on Captain Percy's side was expressed in sitting cross-legged with his back turned as completely to his wife as the seat would allow, while his face sullen and forbidding, told a different tale, to what it had done the first time I saw them together; his wife did not content herself with anything so undemonstrative, but on the contrary continued to talk with rapidity, and even push him with her elbow, as if she wished him to give her more place on the seat, he occupying at least three

parts of the same while she and her various packages had the third; to her appeals whether of voice or touch, Captain Percy paid not the slightest attention, until the poor young woman seemed to be working herself up to a perfect frenzy, when fortunately Sandy Mitchell who was in the compartment between her and me, attracted most likely by her voice, turned round and seeing her uncomfortable position, immediately got up and arranged her various encumbrances in the cradle over head.

The lady being now seated a little more comfortably, settled her skirt, arranged her sack and collar, pulled the bow and strings attached to her bonnet into better order, produced from her pocket a spotless cambric pocket-handkerchief (the embroidery and lace of which even at the distance I sat from her, I recognized as having seen before I ever saw the one in whose possession it now was,) and a gold *vinaigrette*. And now having made all her preliminary arrangements and seated herself as comfortably as possible under the circumstances, she began to look around, her eyes almost at once fell upon me; I was instantly recognized, that was very evident, and equally apparent that the unexpected appearance was fraught with anxiety to her; she gave a furtive glance at her husband as if she would see whether he had also seen and was aware of who I was, but as his back was towards her, any desire of information in that way was futile; meantime I regarded her with the look of one who had seen her

for the first time. After the lapse of a few minutes, she seemed to realize that I did not recollect who she was, or else that she herself must have been mistaken, yet for the first hour of our journey, she continued to cast anxious and wary looks towards where I sat.

When we stopped for breakfast, Captain Percy and his wife were seated so close to me that I could hear every word they said; he began his morning repast by walking up to the bar and swallowing a large glass of brandy; this had evidently molified his temper somewhat, as he courteously seated Mrs. Percy before he sat down, and presently both were busily engaged in doing justice to the viands set before them, and making smart remarks on those around.

"Do you know any body here?" enquired Mrs. Percy.

"Not a soul," was the reply of her husband, as he gave a glance round the table.

"Do you see that old-maidish looking thing in black?" asked she in a whisper, directing her eyes towards me as she spoke.

"Yes, what of her," was the reply. "Are you jealous? She is such a beauty, I should not wonder;" and he laughed, looking good-humoredly in her face, as he spoke.

"No, I dont think I have any need," she replied, laughing, "but it seems to me as if I had seen her before."

"Possibly you have, but if so, you have the advantage of me, she is some Scotch quiz or another; she is of the same party as that old Scotch grandmother and her son; you see they all sat down to eat together, it is a pity there is no porridge here for them."

This elicited another laugh from the lady; they were now in great good humor with each other, and she in particular, relieved by finding he had not recognized me as one of Lady Gordon's household, in which case he might have addressed himself to me, and thereby the danger incurred of my repeating any of the conversation which took place between her and myself in Kay's Hotel.

The brandy which Captain Percy took at breakfast had a double effect; it not only made him good humored then, but it had a soporific tendency, so that a short time after, when we again set off on our journey, he slept soundly.

The certainty that I was unknown to Captain Percy, and the uneasiness which his wife manifested on seeing me, were both cause of congratulation, because taken jointly, he was not at all likely to find out my errand to Montreal; I could keep my own counsel, unless those of whom I must make enquiries in order to find the grave, no one need know wherefore I came.

Captain Percy awoke just as we arrived at our last stopping place in the United States, a miserable place called Island Pond, where we were to take dinner; poor man, it was pretty evident he wanted

another glass of brandy—the first effect of his morning dram having passed off—the reaction had now come, and he was again in a sulky mood ; we had to ascend a long staircase, almost like a broad ladder with a bannister at each side, I fancy there must have been at least forty or fifty steps, yet Captain Percy never once offered his assistance to his wife, in the ascent, but sullenly stalked on in front, leaving her to follow as she best could ; however, he had recourse to his panacea of the morning, and I found with like effect. I was seated opposite to them at dinner, and then had the opportunity, which I missed in the morning, of seeing how he fed ; on this point, I was a little curious ; I never saw a man of Captain Percy's disposition and habits who was not a large eater, and I was pleased to have an opportunity of seeing whether my theory would be carried out in his case ; it was most fully ; plateful after plateful of fish and meat disappearing, then pudding, cheese, cakes, and last of all, several cups of tea, an addition I had never seen made to the dinner table before ; I however found it in common use in Montreal, and ere I left Canada became so accustomed to its use, as to fancy I had no dinner unless tea was served with the fruit. Captain Percy was certainly one of the largest eaters I ever saw, so enormous was his appetite that he was himself conscious he ate more than other men, which is very seldom the case ; most great eaters do not know they eat more than others, or affect to think they do not, but his consumption of food was so great as to utterly preclude the possibility of his deceiving either him-

self or others, so he made the best of it—he joked at his own gluttony—calling on his wife to take notice how well he was getting the worth of his money, but the lady had again relapsed into the fretfulness of the morning, and replied by a very curt “dont bother me.” It did not require the wisdom of Solomon to see that these two had found each other out.

By some re-arrangement in the cars when we returned from dinner, Captain and Mrs. Percy were placed in the compartment in front of where I sat, but with their backs turned towards me.

Long ere we arrived at Montreal, Mrs. Percy demanded of her husband in accents far from mild, where they were going to live during their residence in Montreal; to her first, nay even to her second and third enquiry, he deigned no reply, at length, perhaps worn out, he replied in a gruff voice: “The St. Lawrence Hall.”

“Oh! I am so glad,” replied she, I do hate those two-penny half-penny places, one never has anything decent to eat, and as to me I always feel afraid of having my clothes soiled in their dusty greasy looking parlors.”

He was sitting with his back turned towards her as in the first part of the journey, but on her making the above observation, he turned round and looking her full in the face, asked very quietly: “Why do you go to such places then? I should suppose there is no necessity for your doing so.”

"How can I help it when you take me there? I am sure I never would choose to go was I not obliged to," was the reply.

"That matter can be easily arranged," returned he in the same feigned calm tone, as he had assumed before, "You need only to pay the Hotel bill from the fortune you brought me, inherited through the Countess your mother, and I shall willingly take you to the most expensive Hotel wherever we go."

"Fortune!" replied she, with a sneer and in a louder accent than was advisable surrounded as they were by strangers; "You got too much when you got myself, when you *had* a Countess' daughter, you did not enjoy her much or use her too well either if it comes to that," and then in a lower tone: "If I had known then what I know now, I would not have been here to-day."

"Devil," was the muttered answer, as he turned his back upon her, usurping as much of the seat as possible.

"There's one of us a devil, that's sure enough," was her rejoinder in the same low and cutting tone as before.

He replied by humming an air from Robert le Diable, in which recreation he indulged until the conductor opened the car door and announced "Montreal."

I had determined to avoid the hotel where Captain Percy said he was to go, although that was the one the Reverend Doctor had advised me to remain at

until I could obtain a boarding-house, as a more permanent home ; so when Mrs. Campbell's daughter and son-in-law came into the cars to meet their mother, I requested them to point out a hotel other than the St. Lawrence, to which I might go ; this they did, and Mr. Grant, the son-in-law went at once to call a cab to bring myself and luggage to the Ottawa. I went to the luggage car, that I might give in my checks and see that all was safe, and when passing out left Captain and Mrs. Percy at war, as to whether she would, or would not remain in the cars until he had obtained a conveyance and looked after the luggage ; it was shortly settled however, as I had scarcely arrived at the luggage car ere he was by my side ; his luggage was all ready on the platform, and consisted of four large travelling trunks and two small valises. The trunks he ordered to be put into the baggage room, and signing to a cabman, he delivered the two valises to him ; scarcely had he done so, when Mrs. Percy was by his side, loaded with her band-box, basket and shawls ; she at once understood that her travelling trunks had been put into the baggage room and remonstrated strongly against such a proceeding, saying that she required to wear the dresses contained therein, and would not move from the platform without at least one of the trunks, Captain Percy gave a sarcastic laugh, said she would most likely feel cold if she remained for the trunk, as the checks were in his possession and he did not intend to trouble himself to bring trunks to an hotel where he would most likely not remain over

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a day or two; and turning round, coolly followed the cab-man who carried his valise. Poor Mrs. Percy stood for a second or two looking after her husband, as if she could scarcely believe her eyes, and she expected him to return, but no, he kept on the even tenor of his way; so, as she saw it was very evident he would not come back, she hurried after him as fast as her various packages would allow, first however declaring in tones which showed she had no wish to make secret of her words. "I'll make short work of this; I'll not put up with it much longer."

It seemed a mystery to me how two who appeared so fond of each other, only a few weeks before, could live such a snappish, quarrelling life now. God had not joined them, it was too apparent.

I had a comfortable bedroom that night, and an excellent breakfast next morning at the Ottawa Hotel. After breakfast, I asked to see the landlord, and requested him to direct me to a good boarding-house, as I intended to remain some weeks in Montreal, perhaps longer, and would like more privacy than a house on so large a scale as his afforded. He at once pointed out to me an advertisement in a daily paper, where the advertiser wished for one boarder to reside in a private family. This was just what I wanted; and taking the number of the house, and the name of the street, I, by the aid of a cabman, soon arrived at the residence I sought, a good sized house with large trees in front. I was ushered into a room neatly and

plainly furnished, where two young girls sat busily engaged in sewing, and in a few minutes, their mother, a portly woman, came to talk to me on the business which brought me there. I told her my errand, and for a few minutes she merely answered by looking me over, as I fancied, that she might find out by my appearance, whether or not I was the sort of person she would like for her 'one boarder.' At last having finished her survey, she said in rather a repelling tone—

"I dont care much about taking ladies, they give so much trouble, and at any rate I'm sure you would not give the price I ask; I want seven dollars a week; you see this is a very good house, and I pay a large rent, and so I wont take any one under seven dollars."

As she concluded speaking, she rose from her seat, evidently expecting that the sum she asked was more than I either could or would give.

The landlord of the Ottawa told me that in private families or boarding-houses, they never took ladies, except when they had failed to obtain gentlemen, so I was partly prepared for the cool reception I met with, but the house was clean and comfortable looking; she, herself and the two girls had an air of perfect respectability, and so I resolved, if possible, to give her house a trial. I was wholly unused to strangers, and the voice of the woman (a Scotch one) and the comely pleasant looking faces of the girls had a home sound and look, very attractive. I had been told I would pay five, or at most six dollars a week,

so I felt sure the seven now asked was in order to frighten me away from the house, but it had the contrary effect. I saw she was particular about who she would take into her house. and this was exactly what I wished.

I too rose from my seat, saying, "I will give seven dollars cheerfully, if the room you have to let suits me; will you show it to me?"

"I'll do that," replied she, in not a whit more pleasant tone than before, "but," added she, "you must pay before-hand, and by the week."

"I shall certainly do so," was my answer, "I could not expect you to take a stranger into your house on any other terms."

My words seemed to open a new sluice by which I might be turned out, and she quickly rejoined, "but I cannot take any one, whatever they pay, without a reference."

I colored as she spoke, and seeing I was hurt, she added in a half conciliatory tone—

"I don't know you and you don't know me, so I'll give you a reference, and you'll give me one, and that will be satisfactory to both."

I had in my pocket book a certificate of church membership from the clergyman whose ministrations I attended on at Leith; it was enclosed in a letter addressed to a minister of the Free Church, in Montreal, so I at once handed it to her; on looking at it she colored as much as I had formerly done,

and as she returned me the missive, said in a gracious tone and a changed manner, "That is enough; this is our own minister's name, I will show you the room and if you like it, you can come."

Leading the way from the room and up the staircase, she reverted to the caution with which she at first received me, saying—

"You see I don't keep boarders, it is more for company than anything else, and so I have to be very particular in choosing who I will take."

I acceded to this with a good grace, telling her it was just such a place I wished to live in, and so saying was ushered into a good sized bedroom looking to the front, the windows of which were shaded by the trees I noted on my arrival; everything in the room was scrupulously clean and neat, and I at once agreed to take it, offering her two sovereigns that she might pay herself for the first week, requesting permission to bring my trunk and at once instal myself in my new domicile; this was accorded, the lady a second time informing me she did not keep boarders, she only wanted one for company as the girls sometimes felt lonesome. I assured her I felt favored by her selection of me, and at once departed in search of my trunk from the Ottawa.

By noon, I was comfortably seated in my own room, in Mrs. Dunbar's house, (such was my landlady's name) employed in writing to grandpapa, Ella, Marion, and Mr. Morton, informing them of my safe arrival in Montreal, telling the latter that Captain Percy was

also there, and that in consequence I would observe as strict a reserve as possible on the subject of my business in Canada.

Towards evening the Misses Dunbar accompanied me to the post-office, afterwards taking me through the principal streets and squares, so that I might have an idea of the place I was to sojourn in for at least six weeks. The city was beautiful, everything looking so clean and fresh; the streets lined with trees on either side; the squares enlivened by gardens in the centre, with fountains throwing up their waters to give a coolness to the air; the sun brighter and the sky more clearly blue than any I could hope to see in Scotland; yet, even in these, the first hours of my arrival, I found myself calculating which trip of the vessel I had come out in, I would be able to return by.

How little are we masters of our destiny? Had I known the "woe and watching waiting for me down the road," I fear my faith, strong as it was, would have failed me, and I would have returned whence I came, bearing the reproach of my own conscience all my life long; as it was, if I suffered, God brought me out of all my trouble, strengthened and purified, and by the experience of a woe that nearly made me crazy, He gave me sympathy with those whom otherwise I would have ever passed by as the Levite did of old. It also made me very careful in passing judgment on others, no matter how appearances were against them, and it showed me as nothing else

could, that it was a small thing to be condemned of men's judgment; and above and beyond all, by that sore tribulation I was given sight for faith; when all else had utterly failed, when everything which money could do or man's ingenuity suggest, proved helpless to aid me (as the thistle down to cover and shelter from the fierce wintry wind, the poor naked wretch who lies dying by the wayside), then my Father which is in Heaven stretched forth His hand and took me from the fearful pit and the miry clay, making my righteousness clear as the noon-day.

Between six and seven o'clock, we had tea, which in Montreal (in boarding-houses at least) is called supper, and so it may. It is not a cup of tea and a piece of cake, as we have in Britain, but a hearty meal, consisting, besides tea and coffee, of fruit pies, various kinds of cakes, meat, and occasionally potatoes. I stared in wonder when I saw all the good things provided, but this is really necessary, where, as in Montreal, the dinner is served at noon-day, and there is no other supper.

Mrs. Dunbar accompanied me to my room on my retiring for the night, and there took an opportunity of asking me whether I knew if any of the others who accompanied me from Scotland to Montreal required board, as she had still another room unoccupied, at the same time again deprecating the idea of her keeping boarders. This latter fact she did not fail to impress on me at least once a day during my residence in her house. Poor woman, during her

husband's life time she was in rather affluent circumstances, and now that it was necessary to work for her own and children's living, she felt above the only business which seemed to afford her a prospect of so doing. We so often feel like this when a little reflection would tell us that no matter what is our occupation, provided it be honest and upright, we ourselves are unchanged, and that it is our own conduct and character that can lift or abase us in the eyes of those whose good opinion, friendship or acquaintance is worth cultivating.

Mrs. Dunbar, before bidding me good bye for the night, informed me that I would be well protected, as she and her daughters slept in the room to my left, while her son Ralph, an ungainly looking boy of from sixteen to eighteen, whom I had the pleasure of seeing at tea, reposed on the right. I had very demonstrative evidence of this latter fact an hour later.

I had just put out my candle and got into bed when I heard Mrs. Dunbar call out in no under tone.

"Ralph, are you in bed?"

"Certainly, I'm in bed," replied the boy, "where would I be?"

"Is your light out?"

"Yes."

"Are you sure of that?"

"Certainly, I am."

Instantly a heavy flap sounded through the silence,

as if of bare feet jumping out on the floor, then a slipshod running past my door and into the boy's room, with a half shocked loud exclamation of—

“Well, now Ralph, how can I ever believe a word you say?”

“Why, mother?” in a tone of surprise.

“Because you told me your lamp was out.”

“Well, and so it is,” laughing loudly at his own wit. “You asked me if I was in bed, and I said yes; and then you asked me if the light was out, and I thought you meant out of bed, and I said yes, too; if you had asked me if my lamp was extinguished, of course I would have said, no.”

“Where is that novel you were reading?” asked the mother.

“Why, mother, you know I never read novels,” was the reply.

“No,” said the mother, “I know no such thing; you read novels every night when you go to bed, and I am determined to put a stop to it in future. I have told you a hundred times, I would have no reading in bed and this is the last time I’ll leave a lamp with you; I’ll take it away before I go to bed myself,” and then the slipshod feet passed my door in regaining their own room.

This little scene was re-enacted at least three times every week, each time the mother declaring that she would remove the lamp before going to bed in future, and thereby prevent the danger which she incurred of

taking cold by (what she called) her midnight visits to his chamber.

Next morning, at an early hour, I called on Doctor Balfour, the clergyman to whom I had an introduction from our own minister, and first delivering my credentials, I explained to him the reason of my visiting Montreal, telling him at the same time of my encounter with Captain Percy on the cars, and the necessity that I conceived there was therefore of making my enquiries as to the place of burial, disinterring of the body, etcetera, as privately as possible.

Doctor Balfour fully concurred in this, advising me at the same time, as Captain Percy had said in my hearing, that he was only to be a few days in Montreal, to delay any proceedings whatever in the matter, until I had ascertained the fact of Captain Percy's departure, adding—

“I much doubt whether you will be able to have the body disinterred without his special permission. The body was interred as that of his wife, hence, I hardly think it will be possible to have it exhumed without an order from him.”

I told him that this difficulty had been thought over and as far as possible provided against; that I had in my possession documents from the first authorities in Edinburgh, to the gentlemen in office here, requesting that the body might be delivered into my charge, and in case this should fail, I had orders to send a cable telegram to Mr. Morton, who, if need

be, would himself come to Canada to effect the removal of the body, if I was unable to do so.

Doctor Balfour seemed lost in thought for some moments, and at last said—

“You tell me that Mrs. Percy’s death preceded that of her mother by a whole year, how did it come about that some one was not despatched long ago to disinter the body ere it had become so dangerous as it must be now? unless that it had been interred in a leaden coffin, a precaution which is not always taken.”

I then explained the circumstances to him more fully, dwelling particularly on the fact that Lady Gordon never believed in the account given of her daughter’s death, and that until within a very few weeks of her demise, she constantly looked forward to her own restoration to health and strength, enabling her to take upon herself the task of finding her daughter.

Doctor Balfour was evidently deeply interested, and putting his hand across his eyes, continued so for several seconds, and then questioned me closely as to whether Lady Gordon’s faith in her daughter’s still being alive never wavered; I answered in the negative, assuring him that on the contrary we knew by her ladyship’s face, and the signs that she gave after her tongue had lost all power of utterance, that her belief in her daughter’s being still alive, and her desire that she might be sought for, were if possible more intense than ever.

The doctor paused a longer time than before, and then with an earnestness of voice and manner which I remember distinctly at the present moment, although it is now in the long ago, said, "I will help you by every means in my power to discover the place where Lady Gordon's daughter is interred, but I believe I will be helping you to no purpose were you to find the grave to-morrow, my firm belief is there will be no body there, or if there is it will not be the body of Lady Gordon's daughter. The world with the things therein; the cloud of witnesses, that unseen are yet constantly round about and ministering to us, is the same in this nineteenth century as it was when the hair of Job's flesh stood on end, and the horror of great darkness came upon him. This conviction so strongly impressed on Lady Gordon's mind, could not have been born of her own thoughts; her child had been ailing for some time, and had been by your account always a delicate tenderly nurtured girl, hence she was prepared to hear of her death at any time, but when it came, a conviction came with it that the report was false. You may find the living breathing, Mrs. Percy, but her body,—no."

I stared at the doctor as he spoke, scarcely knowing what to make of it, and then asked him—

"What is your advice? What would you have me to do?"

"You will, in the first place," said he, "ascertain that Captain Percy has left Montreal, and having done so, I, myself will accompany you to the various

places where deaths are registered ; we will, at once see whether such a name is recorded there. So far, your work is easy ; to find the living woman is a matter of far greater difficulty. There is no likelihood of her being in Montreal, and the country districts in Canada are so scattered, particularly among the French population, where it is most likely he would have placed her, he having brought her here at first, by his second wife's account, to prevent her being able to communicate with those who spoke her own language, that seeking for her there without any clue to her whereabouts would be a hopeless task indeed ; however, when you have all other preliminaries settled, I will talk over the matter with some of the French priests ; it is possible that she may be discovered through them, if not, it is a hopeless case."

I left Doctor Balfour's house, wondering that a learned man, and above all others, a Presbyterian minister, could entertain the idea for a moment, that the visions which floated through Lady Gordon's brain, were aught else than a waking dream ; however, I determined to do as he had directed me, at all events, in the early part of the programme which he had laid out, and as it was still too early to ascertain Captain Percy's whereabouts, I set myself to find a dressmaker, and have the clothes made, which, but for the haste of my departure should have been done in Scotland.

About a week after my arrival in Montreal, I went, accompanied by Miss Dunbar, to the St. Lawrence

Hall, to ascertain if Captain Percy was still there, and was directed by a person I saw in the hall, to a clerk, who was the one who best could give all information as to the visitors.

"Are Captain and Mrs. Percy still here?" I enquired of the young man in question.

"Who, ma'am?" asked he.

"Captain and Mrs. Percy," replied I, repeating my former words.

"There is no such person here," was the reply, "you have probably mistaken the hotel."

I was sure this could not be the case, and I said so. "I heard Captain Percy direct the cabman to drive to the St. Lawrence Hall, as I was stepping into the cab containing my own luggage."

"That is extraordinary," said he, "as there is no such name in our visitor's book for a month past, I am sure, but to satisfy you, I will look it over from the day you mention," and opening a large book, he ran his eye and finger down several columns, but all to no purpose, there was no such name to be found.

"Perhaps the hotel was too full, and you could not admit them," suggested I.

"Oh no," replied the man, with a smile, "we have at least a hundred unoccupied beds; our busy season has not commenced yet, but it is possible Captain Percy may have changed his mind before he reached the house, and gone to another hotel."

I saw the feasibility of this, and at once directed

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my steps to the Ottawa, but only to receive the same answer. Miss Dunbar spent the whole day in accompanying me to every hotel where it was at all likely a gentleman would live, with invariably the like success. It was quite evident Captain Percy was not in Montreal, and in my own mind, I came to the conclusion that the amiable man, to annoy his wife, had brought her to some of the villages in the vicinity of the city, at all events, he was not likely to cross my path.

It was late in the evening ere we returned home, and I was pleased to find that although Mrs. Dunbar was still declaring she did not keep boarders, she had added another inmate to her establishment. The young Presbyterian clergyman who crossed the Atlantic with me the week before, had seen and answered her second advertisement, and been accepted as I was. During the two days I had passed in her house, she took me so far into her confidence, that I now knew she was the widow of an officer, and the daughter of a clergyman, and like many such, on the death of her husband, found that she had not sufficient to buy bread for herself and children; she had tried many ways of making a living for them—taught school; went out to teach; took in sewing; all in succession, had failed of supplying the need, and now as a last resource, she had taken in a few boarders to make the two ends meet.

I found that Mr. Denham, the young clergyman, was to occupy a small room at the top of the stair-

case, and in consideration of this, his board was to be only four dollars. As the good woman told me this, she said innocently—

“I got seven dollars from you so easily for one of the front rooms that I thought I would have got five for the one he is in, but he told me at once he was poor and could not afford to give more than four, and he stayed so long and praised the room, saying it was just such a one he wanted, that I know he wished to come. It is not every day a poor woman like me has it in her power to do a good turn, so I thought I would just take him, he looked so tired like; perhaps he was worn out searching for a place; when I told him, he should have the room, he said, ‘I am very glad, your house is just what suits me, I want to be where there are no other boarders.’”

“But,” said I, “how will this be? I am another boarder.”

“Oh!” replied she, “I told him there was a young lady living in the house, but that she was like one of the family, so he made no objections to that, and how could he? Do you think he can choose where he is to board at four dollars a week, and beef costing twenty-five cents a pound? That puts me in mind of the bill I have to pay the butcher; I am sure, I hope I will have another answer to the advertisement tomorrow, and that I’ll get a good price for the other front room; it’s a terrible life this, living from hand to mouth, and the two girls working as hard as if they had been some poor man’s children.”

Some sad reminiscence came over the poor woman, and she had recourse to her handkerchief. I comforted her the best way I could, saying, I had no doubt she would have another boarder to-morrow, and that in a few years, her son would be a man and able to help them.

"Yes indeed," she replied in a cheerful tone, "It is only for a time, and I am very glad I took the minister, it is so respectable to have a clergyman in the house, I'll try and get him to keep family worship, and then when we get the house full of boarders, they'll be awed down and kept quiet by having a minister among them."

As she left me, I smiled at the alacrity with which I had answered her advertisement for one boarder, in a house where no others were kept.

Next morning, I went at an early hour to see Doctor Balfour, informing him of my non-success in finding the dwelling place of Captain Percy. He agreed with me in the idea that that gentleman had gone to one of the villages instead of the St. Lawrence Hall, adding that most likely he was now in Ottawa, which owing to the government being there was a more suitable place for a gay man and an officer like Captain Percy.

Doctor Balfour at once offered to accompany me to make inquiries of the proper officials, so as to ascertain the registration of Mrs. Percy's death, but in this we were wholly unsuccessful. It is of no use giving a detailed account of the various places we went to

for the purpose, suffice it to say that the whole of the forenoon, and for several hours on two succeeding days, every register we had access to was carefully searched, no name, such as Percy or Gordon could be found. Of the latter, indeed, there were three men of the name, scattered throughout the various registers, but a woman's name of either was not there. Doctor Balfour seemed rather pleased than otherwise, at the result of our investigation, repeating his conviction that Mrs Percy was still in the land of the living; be that as it might, there was no sign of her death having taken place in Montreal.

When our search was wholly finished, Doctor Balfour accompanied me to the door of my boarding house, and before he left me, said—

“Now, if you take my advice, you will try another means of finding out the object of your search, you will spend at least several weeks in endeavoring to find a clue to the living woman. I will send you a directory, and by it you can divide the town into sections, take one each day, and go to every French house, taking them consecutively as they come. Do not pass one, from an idea of its being the residence of people who are above taking strangers into their houses; do not pass one, because it looks mean, we do not know the springs of action which influenced Captain Percy in coming here; we can only judge from the accounts given by the young woman you met in Edinburgh, that his motive was to conceal his wife, and prevent her from correspon-

ing with her friends; on the one hand, his own position as an officer, a man of good family, and son-in-law to a lady of rank, may have given him the *entrée* into families which to one less favored by circumstances would have been denied; on the other his own proclivities may have led him to select for his purpose, people of a very low grade, such being employed as mere tools, so that neither high nor low must be left without such investigation, as you are enabled to make; I would avoid all mention of the lady's death in every case, not even hinting that such a thing had ever been suspected; I can give you no further directions, you may probably have to adopt a different phraseology with every separate man and woman whose house you enter, your own judgment must be your guide, but I have such confidence in your obtaining by this means some information which will ultimately lead to the discovery of the lost one, that were I an adept in the French language as you are, I would accompany you in your investigations an hour or two every day."

I had little hopes of eliciting any information from such a course of proceeding; I did not view the matter in the light he took of it, yet I had signally failed in my first efforts; the plan I had formed before leaving home under the counsel of those lawyers whose life study was to find out the secret things that men commit, thinking to hide them from the eye of their fellows forever; my own judgment was quite at fault; I was out at sea without sail or

oar ; the doctor was one who had resided many long years in Canada, his experience was larger, his judgment more mature than mine, and I resolved to try his plan, at all events until I could communicate with, and hear from Mr. Morton, and so it was decided I should begin my work in this way next morning.

Mr. Denham made a great improvement to our family circle at Mrs. Dunbar's; he consented to her wish that he would conduct family worship in the house, and seemed to take such an interest in herself and family, that I felt in the event of her obtaining more boarders, her having given him the room at a low rate was a wise speculation on her part. Mr. Denham spent his evenings entirely in the house, and had always something amusing to tell of what he had seen, or heard, or read, during the day when I got the directory he helped me to make my lists of French houses in each street, although he had not the most distant idea for what I was going to visit these French people; some years previous he had been in Montreal as tutor to the children of one of the richest men in the city, and consequently knew the position of quite a number of those better French families which were on my list, and by the information thus gained, I hoped to profit in making my inquiries, but alas, the task set me was anything but a pleasant one, the poorer people seemed to like the little gossip my inquiries called forth, asking me all imaginable questions about Captain Percy and his wife, of which if I had answered only the one-half,

listened in return to half the 'oh's' and 'bah's' which would have been uttered in reply, it would have most likely taken me a year to complete my investigations, as it was, I for several weeks went out day by day, traversing the streets from morn 'till eve with no better success than resulted from my first attempts to discover Mrs. Percy's death; living or dead, it seemed impossible to find the slightest trace of her in Montreal; many of whom I made inquiries told me of English ladies who had lived in their houses, turned sick and died, or who had come to them, recovered and gone home, to the United States, or Upper Canada; but of Mrs. Percy, no one had ever heard. I was getting utterly heartsick and weary of such a useless life; wandering about for nothing, and when at last it was over, although it left me without other employment at least until Mr. Morton's letter should arrive, I felt thankful that I might remain in the house.

The day after I had finished looking for Mrs. Percy as alive, when I had convinced Doctor Balfour that nothing more could be done, I wrote again to Mr. Morton, telling him the result of my second search, and begging of him to suggest some other way in which I could employ my time for the furtherance of the cause I had taken in hand; I was perfectly at a loss how to proceed, and unless some line of conduct was pointed out to me, I must sit with folded hands.

I was very tired of the aimless life I was now leading. Ever since my mother's death, when compari-

tively speaking I was little more than a child, I had led a life of activity, a life in which my hourly ministrations were necessary to some one for a specified purpose, a life in which were I to leave the duties of the hour unfulfilled, some one, other than myself must suffer loss; my habits of concentration and industry had thus been trained to the utmost, and now when there was no need for the exercise of either, my spirit seemed to have lost its spring; I do not think I was ever so many hours weary, as in that long week—how that week makes me pity those who not only spend a week, or a month, or a year, but all their lives long in the same listless, vapid, aimless way—and while writing on this subject, words which I heard a good man utter long ago, come to my mind so clearly I am tempted to write them down—

“Would that all young women would look forward to, and prepare for the duties God has designed them to fulfil; love what He has commanded, desire what He has promised, that all would endeavour to train themselves to be good and obedient wives, tender and wise mothers, diligent and prudent heads of families. Do those things which God has ordained, and keep to them faithfully until life shall end; in the cares and anxieties as well as the comforts of domestic life, ‘with humility and spiritual joy, bear the sweet yoke of Jesus Christ, hoping all things, retailing no scandal, refusing even to listen to it, stirring up no strife, but appeasing wrath, pouring oil on the troubled waters, and speaking peace amid

every storm. Be sober in dress; it is not womanly to assume a style which suggests the pride which apes humility, this frequently arises from a desire to attract attention, a motive which every wise and modest woman should eschew, if there is vanity in being at the very height of the fashion of the day, there may also be much of the same feeling in lagging too far in the rear of harmless customs."

"In the midst of a world God has clothed so beautifully, and decorated with so much grace, it would be almost a libel on Him, to be careless as regards attire, but let not dress ever divert from duty, absorb the thoughts, unfit for proper occupation, be inconsistent with the station of life in which God has placed us, involve expenses out of proportion to our income, thus depriving us of the means of ministering to the wants of others."

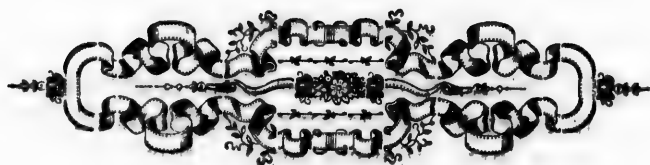
"But while we neglect not the body, we must still more endeavour to cultivate the mind. The entire universe of knowledge is open equally to woman as to man, but only in a few cases, do capacity, inclination, and circumstances concur, so that it is not possible, even were it desirable, that women in general should be learned, but they may be fitted to be companions of those who are so, by being sensible, intelligent, and well informed."

"This however cannot be, if the chief reading of woman is to be the trashy fiction of the present day, sensational novels, and the superficial, ephemeral, desultory contents of many of our numberless perio-

dicals ; it would be folly to say, read nothing but the Bible and religious works, but God's word is, ' Search the Scripture ;' let no day pass without the serious prayerful study of the word of God. Let all works of imagination be well selected ; be such as will refresh and refine as well as amuse. Read instructive authors, the history of nations as well as individuals, the wide realms of nature, the great master pieces of the genius of all ages, furnish an inexhaustible field for profitable study. Accomplishments which refine the taste and give real pleasure to ourselves or others are not to be neglected, yet much time and money is often worse than wasted in the futile attempt to acquire that for which there is no natural taste, far better is the accomplishment of a mind stored with varied knowledge, of sound judgement, and of refined taste, capable of taking an interest in general conversation, in surrounding facts and in the events and opinions of the day. There are works also, from which no wealth however great, no rank however exalted, should exempt a true woman. Look well to your own households, leave not everything to others. The mistress is ultimately responsible for her domestics, see that they do their duty and do not by negligence tempt them to indolence or dishonesty which may bring disgrace to both mistress and maid. A well ordered household, shows a well ordered mind at the head of it. Attend also to the welfare of domestics, see to their bodily wants, their reasonable recreation, their spiritual improvement, be their thoughtful friend as well as their

careful mistress, vigilant over their comfort as well as their conduct. Thus by a well regulated household, a well informed mind, by cheerfulness and love, render home delightful, the happiest place to husband, elder sons or brothers. This is no mean object to live for, but every Christian woman may find time to do more. Gather in neglected children from the street, and in the Sabbath school, visit the widows and fatherless in their affliction, read to the blind, sit by the bedside of the sick, minister to their bodily wants as far as you are able, and tell them of the Great Physician of souls."





CHAPTER XIII.

And the night cometh wet with dew,
Oh Father, let Thy light shine through.

OVER a year from the time of Captain Percy's last visit to Isle Jesus, he was again driving along the same road, and with the same end in view, namely, to ascertain whether the angel of death had relieved him from a wife whom he had detested from the day he found she would not yield herself subservient to be a mere tool in his hands for extracting money from her mother.

On the former occasion, his driving was fast and furious, at present he gave reins to his horse, seeming as if he would delay the visit, in case it should bring him the certainty that his wife still lived, while he now knew that he had no means to pay for her board, and that part of his object in visiting St. Martin's, was to relieve the Curé of the money to be paid to the farmer, in case of her death, if it was still in his hands.

Since his last journey on this road, he had led a stirring and checkered life, at one time spending nearly all his waking hours in the gaming saloons at Baden Baden, from which he had been ignomini-

ously expelled, having been detected in an attempt to cheat with loaded dice, an extra pack of cards, or some such help to which men resort when 'the honor among thieves' has departed from them. At another time, trying his fortune in the hells of Paris and London, and when those broad roads to ruin had entirely failed him, leaving Abby, the companion of all his wanderings (and who still conceived herself the wife of an independant gentleman) in London, he went down to Westmoreland to make another sponging attempt on the pockets of his sisters and aunt; his uncle being too much a man of the world, not to see clearly enough that 'poor Bertram's' want of success was entirely owing to his own idle and expensive habits. On this visit, he was not so successful as usual, finding only one of his sisters at home, and that one the most obdurate of the three, the other two having gone to make the tour of North Germany, with a party of friends, and hence completely beyond his reach, besides, he well knew that the uncle, who was their guardian, would not, while they were travelling, supply them with much loose cash, lest they should be tempted into extravagances which he did not approve.

He contrived to spend three miserably dull days in his old home, and on taking his departure under the plea of attending to the business which had brought him to Britain, found himself scarcely a hundred dollars richer than when he arrived.

On his return to London, he found a letter from

Mr. Morrison (who hoped as Captain Percy's agent to come in for a few pickings), informing him of Lady Gordon's death, and as we have before seen hastened to attend the funeral, contenting himself, however with being present at the reading of the will. The reader already knows how much satisfaction that afforded him. His return to Montreal where he was known simply as Mr. Smith, was necessary, that he might ascertain the much to be desired fact of Mrs. Percy's death; besides in a Colony affording more facilities for such conduct than he could hope to have with the strictly enforced laws of Europe, he might live for a year or two by a carefully organized system of leaving his trunks at railway depots, etcetera, passing from one boarding house to another and from one city to another, without paying any board, a plan which would leave him at liberty to spend the few pounds he could scrape in loans from relatives or acquaintances, in again trying his fortune on a small scale, in billiard and card rooms, and even if the worst came to the worst, and he must enter into some employment as honest men do to gain their daily bread, such a proceeding in a Colony, would not be so utterly derogatory to the character and standing of a gentleman, as would be the case in England.

As he drove along, his thoughts went back to Lady Gordon's death, and her most unnatural will as he called it, inwardly cursing the laws which could permit a woman to dispose of her property as Lady

Gordon had done, begging her son-in-law, her natural heir. Driving along in this mood, he avoided the little *auberge* he had formerly entered, making for the residence of the Curé, that he might ascertain whether the money placed in his charge was still untouched, hoping yet, fearing that it might. In the case of his wife's death, his crime of bigamy was buried in her grave, he was again a free man, he might resume his own name when he pleased, a thing he had never dared to do in Montreal since his departure from New York, in order to immure his wife in a living tomb. On the other hand, if she was dead, and in consequence the money had left the Curé's hands, he had not a dollar left to pay for the horse and vehicle he was now driving, and what was worse, before his departure in the morning, his landlady had warned him that unless he paid his board before the night set in, she would turn himself and his wife out on the street; he was getting to be known as one who never paid a dollar he could avoid, and for the past week, Abby and he had in vain searched for board where the people would wait for payment until the end of the month, when he said his money would arrive from England. He had deceived so many with the hope of receiving those imaginary bills which were to come and yet never did come from England, and one hard working woman had told another, until it seemed to him as if every hotel and boarding-house in Montreal was closed against him.

On arriving at the priest's house, the Curé in-

formed him that the money was still in his hands, and immediately paid it over (one hundred dollars) to its owner.

Although he knew now that the old fear of detection must still hang around him, that he must still have nights when he would suddenly awake in the darkness, with the vision of the grip of justice so strong upon him, the long years of penal servitude so vividly portrayed, that for some minutes it was no dream of the night, but stern, horrible reality, yet so much are we the creatures of the present, that those few dollars in his pocket made him feel once more at ease, and wheeling his horse round to the *auberge*, he threw the reins to the landlord, ordering a dinner and a glass of brandy to fortify him for his long walk, and the scene that must ensue in his interview with his wife.

Having satisfied his appetite, Captain Percy had recourse to a cigar, which had its usual effect of softening down the sharp edges of angry feeling against all and sundry which his naturally irascible disposition constantly called into play; at present he needed its influence more than usual, and aware of this, indulged in a larger portion of the weed, as well as a longer time of repose after dinner than was his wont. Captain Percy was not a lazy man, he was only an idle one; he liked action, but he hated work; he wanted excitement, not repose; and now having put body and mind in as comfortable a state as circumstances would allow; having done all for

himself he possibly could, he prepared for his journey on foot, to arrange it so that others could minister to him also. He was sick of the state of apprehension which must be his, while his wife lived, and he was also tired of those long walks into the bush, fertile of trouble and annoyance, and then the money, he was getting very short of that, and little as it was that had been spent on his wife for the past two years—if it had been a difficulty before—where was it to come from now? This was a question he had asked himself many times, since the day on which he had listened to the reading of Lady Gordon's will; until then, he always buoyed himself up with the idea that arrange it as she would, he could in one way or another, lay hands on part of his children's inheritance. All hope of this was now past forever, and he must make the best of things, bad as they were; the money now in his pocket would ward off the present difficulty about his boarding-house in Montreal, and in three days, the British mail would be delivered, giving into his hands a letter from his sister Alicia, containing a hundred pounds; he knew it must be so, he had written to her in terms which he was aware would enlist all the sympathy of her nature in his favor—the craving, servile hound had at last descended to beggary—the words so sure to draw forth this hundred pounds were: 'Dear Alicia—the money is wanted to buy bread,' and he calculated that should the money he had taken from the Curé be spent in paying for his board; in a day or two, he could again be in a position to pay for Tiny's

funeral expenses, with a few pounds taken from his sister's remittance. He journeyed along in a quieter frame of mind than before his dinner, yet it was necessary he should frame some excuse for not paying the Indian at present, which he had no intention of doing, he knew that these people were both needy and avaricious, so that he would have some difficulty in persuading them to wait for a few days; on the other hand, had he taken the money from the Curé, without going to see them, they would no doubt hear of it, and it would be sure to lead to what he most dreaded—his wife being taken into Montreal, to one of the English priests, as the Indian's wife had threatened to do before—'Well,' said he, soliloquising, as he approached the cottage, 'I must leave it to chance, surely something will turn up that will give me an excuse for taking the money,' and something did.

On opening the door as was his wont, he found the front room empty, whereupon a little relieved by the absence of the Indian and his wife, he straightway made for his wife's chamber. She sat in the window, exactly as she had done on his last visit, only that instead of being asleep she was occupied in reading her Bible; attracted by the sound of his foot step in entering, she looked up, a smile illuminating her face as she stretched out her right hand towards him, saying—

"How strange you should come to-day. I dreamed of you last night; look Bertram, I can raise my right hand."

"So I see," was his rejoinder, the words uttered in a voice and manner which fell like ice upon her heart. "It would be better for you and me both you were dead, instead of able to use your right hand. Where are the old people?"

"They have gone to the other end of the bush for wood, and will not return for some hours," was the reply, the emotion which his speech had brought to her heart, flushing both cheek and brow scarlet.

"I am thankful for that; it is a little relief; I have no money to give for your board now, nor do I know if I ever will again; I have been obliged to take away the money I left with the Curé for your funeral expense; it is very strange you should have lived so long, and I am sure it is not desirable for either yourself or your friends."

"Bertram," replied she, with a composure which surprised herself as she spoke. "It is useless to reproach me with living, you are well aware I do not wish to live, why should I? I live a living death, unable to walk about or communicate in any way with my kind, why should I wish to live, now that my baby, my last hope on earth is dead! Bertram, baby died two months since, and with her passed my last hope on earth. Oh! how gladly would I go and follow my mother and children where there is neither sorrow nor parting," opening the Bible she had in her hand, she held it towards him that he might see on the open leaf a bright golden curl,

adding, "That is one of baby's curls, I cut it off for you, Bertram."

He took no notice of the curl, never once moved to take it from her, and ignoring the fact of his child's death, which he now heard for the first time, he replied—

"If you really wish to die, nothing is easier; I have here what will send you to your mother and your children in less than a minute after you swallow it; and I give it to you to save you from a lingering death, by cold and starvation, which I plainly see staring you in the face; the contents of that bottle is the best friend you have on earth; I will come back in a few days to see you buried; I hope you will be dead when I come."

He was gone! and Tiny knowing now but too surely that all hope for her in this world was dead, that the bitterness of death was past, leant over the little table, gazing with wild staring eyes on the great temptation which lay under them, with her right hand so lately paralyzed she lifted up the accursed thing murmuring softly:

"It is an easy way out of all my trouble." As she yet spoke, a black cloud enveloped the cottage as with a shroud, a fierce wind swept round and round bending the strong trees like saplings, tearing them by the roots, while peal on peal came the awful thunder as if some great rock from heaven had been crushed by the mighty power of God, and the debris hurled down by her side, the zigzag lightning passed

through roof and walls as if commissioned to consume—the voice of God speaking to her in His thunder as clearly as to the Hebrew prophet, “Thou shalt not kill.”

In the old time, Margaret Gordon used to fear the thunder, and would listen with beating heart and pale speechless lips to its mighty voice ; now she sat calm and composed amid the war of elements ; she felt that the God whom her fathers had worshipped in their far off Scottish mountains had stretched forth His arm to save her from a great crime which it might be the loving Christ Himself could not forgive ; Her eyes fell on the open Bible and she read there the blessed words, having a significance in them which to her they never before possessed. “Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life,” and as she read, the faith in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit she had been taught in her childhood by her mother’s knee, and in her girlhood from the pulpits of the Land, came back with all its sweet comfort, clothing her soul with light as with a garment ; and folding her hands on her bosom which for many a long day before she could not have done, she bowed her head in the presence of the Great God, who ruleth the Heavens and the earth and all things that are therein, and although her lips moved not, yet the answer of her soul in all humility went up to God’s footstool. “By Thy help, oh my Heavenly Father, and with the aid of Thy dear Son my Redeemer, I will keep Thy commandment.”

The wind had ceased, the storm had passed away; and although at intervals large drops of rain fell with a heavy sound on the green leaves, telling of a thunder shower, yet the sun shone out again, and the glad birds as they hopped and flew from bough to bough, chirped and sung their song of praise to Him who made them, and gave them this green earth in its beauty for their abiding place; the stricken trees as they still shivered from the effects of the Giant whirlwind, scarcely daring to stretch themselves to their full height yet, held out their long arms as if in grateful expectation of the promised rain. It came at last, as all His promises do come whether written, so that he who runneth may read, or expressed by the voice within which God hath given to each one of us; came in His fulness, as if the fountains of the great deep had been opened. The sun was obscured, not hidden, and the rainbow hung high in the Heavens, as it first spanned the firmament to comfort Noah, and as it will comfort all God's people until the day when there shall be no more sea.

Tiny's worn out frame felt the influence of the hour, and as she lay back in her chair, with closed eyes and folded hands, her lips and thoughts formed themselves into the prayer of her childhood, that prayer which the dear Christ left for all his woe stricken children; "Our Father which art in Heaven"—

"He giveth His beloved sleep." Tiny slept soundly,

undisturbed by the pattering rain or the twittering of the birds as they tried to settle themselves in some sheltered nook beneath the dripping boughs. Suddenly she was startled by hearing her name, "Margaret," called aloud by her mother's voice, and opening her eyes she saw her mother standing by her side; her first thoughts were, "I must have passed into the spirit land," but no; there were the cottage walls, the little table, the open Bible, and that terrible blue bottle, and pointing to the latter, Lady Gordon said, "Margaret, the great tempter of your life has been here, but greater is He who with the temptation can send a way of escape; you have been told that your children are dead, your home and inheritance passed into the hands of strangers; it is not so, it is an invention of the father of lies; come with me my child, I will show you your children." Even while her mother was yet speaking, Tiny found herself in the large old nursery where she and her brother had spent their merry childhood. The French nurse, whom she had sent home with her children, was engaged in undressing a little girl, who was shrieking with laughter at the antics a boy of her own age was kicking up, tumbling somersaults, jumping over stools, etcetera, all the while pursued by Marion who was in vain endeavouring to persuade him to allow himself to be undressed.

"What would your mamma think, Master Charles, if she knew you were such a bad boy? I have half a mind to tell her when she comes home."

"I am a circus man," was the boy's reply, never for one moment ceasing his play, which had now become somewhat dangerous, by his seizing the poker and flourishing it round, as he jumped from chair to stool and from stool to chair again, "circus men have no mammas."

Running into an adjoining room, the little boy dragged from thence a large sized hobby-horse constructed so that the feet pawed the ground, and vaulting into the saddle, he exclaimed with a jaunty nod towards Marion, who stood looking at him as if perfectly hopeless of getting him to bed for an hour; "Now Marion, I am on my high horse, good night; I'm off to Thurlow, wouldn't you like to go, Leonora?" addressing his sister, then shaking his head with a solemn look, he added, "No you had better not, the night is getting very dark, and I won't be back until to-morrow morning."

A moment more, Tiny was walking with her mother through the suite of apartments connected with the grand drawing-rooms; all having the appearance of being constantly in use; again she was seated in the French *habitant's* cottage, the little table with its open Bible, beside which lay the blue bottle laden with its terrible memories, her mother still stood beside her, and placing her hand on Tiny's shoulder, she said—

"Tiny, you cannot go home for yet a little while; the iniquity of Bertram Percy is not yet full; remember what you have seen and cease not to pray for

faith to believe that all things work together for good to those who love God, and are the called according to His purpose ; you must here live by faith not by sight, if there were no mysteries in God's grace, and we could see and judge of things in the light of our own reason, where would be the trial of our faith so precious in His sight?"

A wood pigeon fluttered in through the window, throwing down some trifle in his flight, Tiny opened her eyes, the blessed dream was past, but she went in the strength of that food for many days.

When she awoke to full consciousness, she lifted up the Blue bottle, and opening it, leaned forward so as to enable her to throw its contents out by the window, and holding it there until the last drop had fallen on the fresh wet grass, she laid it down on the outer sill. Having completed her task, she sat with folded hands, looking on the dripping trees, fresh mossy grass and wild flowers, which grew in profusion beneath her window. Her mind felt composed and tranquil, as it had not done for years, and a strong feeling of hope, to which she had long been a stranger, pervaded her whole being ; the remembrance of the vow she had made to keep God's commandment—"Thou shalt not kill," was before her in all its force, and she felt that that commandment was indeed "exceeding broad." That the days passed without tasting food, as had often been the case hitherto, must not occur again ; that when God sent her 'meat to eat,' she must eat it in all thank-

fulness, praising the Giver. Thoughts of Captain Percy came, but they disturbed her not; he was not her husband now; his own word and act had dissolved every tie which ever existed between them, and her thoughts forming themselves into words, she exclaimed aloud: "Farewell, Bertram Percy, forever more."

While the sound of these words fell on her ear, she drew a long breath, as if something which had oppressed her soul had departed, as if she was once more free, and her early days—her mother's home—and the vision of the past hour, came strong upon her, and she felt a full faith as if an angel spoke to her soul; that she had seen her children in the flesh; that she would yet dwell in the old home; that her children lived, and the words of her mother, when as a ministering angel she came to show her the home of her childhood, the same as it had ever been, with Marion there, and the children large and strong, as they would now have been had they lived, came with a double force and power.

"If there were no mysteries in God's grace, and we could see and judge of His ways in the light of our own reason, where would be the trial of faith so precious in His sight?"

The setting sun shone with a radiance of crimson and gold, lighting the tops of the dark fir and cedar trees far down in the bush, while through the pale-green leaves of the wavy maple surrounding the cottage, his gleams came lighting up old moss-grown

stumps and fallen trees, making the brown bark and green moss shine as if lit up with glory from the world beyond; cloudy argosies seemed drifting into the purple dark, and the long low amber reaches lying by the horizon, shaped themselves into the gateways dim and wonderful, leading through the sunset out into the upper world, and looking on the wonders of His glorious creation she felt that if her children were in that upper world, for them it was far better, and that God had now given her grace and strength to bide His time—she could wait.

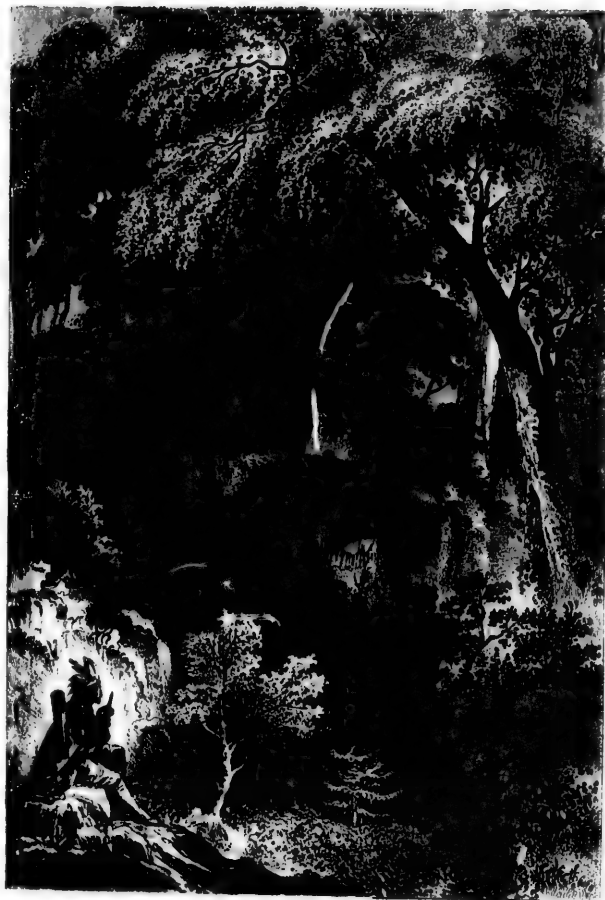
How those glorious sunsets, that great upper ocean with its tides of throbbing stars, make us long to be gone beyond the sunset, out into the primal darkness, into the world of the unknown; sudden gleams—broken shadows—guesses of its grandeur—like falling stars shoot past us quenched within a sea of dreams, but the unimagined glory lying in the dark beyond is to these as silence is to sound, as morn to midnight; sweeter than the trees of Eden dropping fragrant balm and purple blooms are the odors wafted towards us from its isles of stirless calm—and the impearled gold and sapphire of all our sunsets can only bring us hints of the glowing heaven of that upper world—pure and cool water-lilies—pale sea-buds that weep forever, and the mystic lotus shining through its white waves beautiful, bind there the brows of the ever-living whom we blindly call the dead.

Oh! ye departed. Ye who have passed that

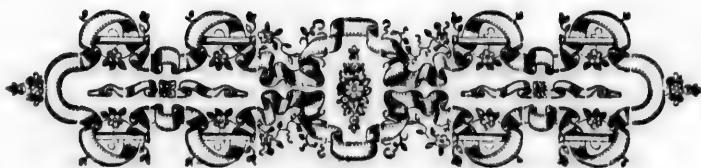
silent shore—Ye whom we call through the sunset, will ye come no more? Will ye not answer and tell us if ye have found those blessed islands where all earth's toils, its cares and sorrows, are over for evermore? Do ye wear the sacred lotus? Have ye entered into peace? Do ye hear us when we call you? Do ye heed our tears? Oh! beloved—Oh! immortal—Oh! ye dead who are not dead! Wave to us a glimmering hand—Speak to us across the darkness—Ye dwellers in the silent land—Tell us but that ye remember!—It cannot be, we must walk by faith in Him who hath left us word “I go to prepare a place for you—I shall come again—If it were not so I would have told you”—Arch and capital are gone—the sunset clouds have faded—and the regal night is glorious with the over blown wealth of stars—life is labor, not dreaming, and we have our work to do ere we tread the Spirit land, ere we wear the lotus.



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THE INDIAN'S HUT



CHAPTER XIV.

THE evening was darkening into night ere the old *habitant* and his squaw returned with the load of wood ; the wood they sought so far from home was hard maple, a tree which did not grow in the bush where their cottage was built, and the strong heat which this wood gave out, was needed to protect them from the bitter cold of the Canadian winter ; the pine, light maple and cedar forming their bush, being wholly inefficient for such a purpose. They brought with them a young girl who spoke English—a grandchild of theirs, who had been more than once at the cottage since Mrs. Percy became one of its occupants—Ma-mon-da-kaw, the young girl and her grandmother, immediately on their arrival, entered Tiny's room, and in their usual manner, seated themselves in silence on the floor, with their hands folded over each other in their laps. Tiny knew they waited for her to begin the conversation, and addressing He-aw-ha, she asked—

“ Have you got good wood ? ”

The girl at once answered as was her wont for her grandmother,

“ Yes, beautiful wood, five feet long, all straight,

without knots, and so dry, the bark is falling off, and it would light with a little bit of chip or anything."

This was enough of preliminary conversation, and Tiny at once entered on the subject which had employed her thoughts since she sat in the early evening looking at the sunset, the difficulty which assailed her then, was how she could make the old Indian or his wife understand that she wanted this girl brought to the cottage, so that she might interpret between them, this difficulty was obviated, and Mrs. Percy at once entered on the subject she had in view.

"The man who brought me here"—in the rare opportunities she had of communicating with the old people, she always spoke of Captain Percy in those terms, the first time Ma-mon-da-kaw had visited her grand parents after Mrs. Percy's residence there, the latter became aware that Captain Percy had represented her to the Indians as his sister, not as his wife, and their common name as Smith, which the Indians pronounced Smit, any endeavour on her part to undeceive them would most likely have excited in them a suspicion of her own veracity, therefore she made no such attempt, but by talking of him as Mr. Smith or her brother, she would be lending her countenance to a lie, this she could by no means do, and hence the manner of designation she used. "The man who brought me here" she began, "came to-day in your absence, and he told me he had no money to pay for my board, nor would he have again; He has taken away the hundred dollars he left with the

Curé, and now I want you to take me into Montreal to-morrow morning; the Curé will give me a letter to some of the hospital convents, and they will take care of me until I get better or die."

Ma-mon-da-kaw explained this to her grandmother with some severe comments of her own on the cruelty of *Le Frere Smit* as she called him; the old woman replied at once:

"I will speak to my husband; he will go to the Curé—we will bring you to Hochelaga;* the medicine man will soon make you better, the Great Spirit of the white man will care for the poor white woman."

"Tell your grandmother," replied Mrs. Percy, "that I am very glad she will bring me to Montreal; ask if we will go to-morrow morning while the moon is yet in the sky."

This was in like manner interpreted to the Indian woman, who replied:

"No.—the horse is too tired, he cannot go by the first moon—we will go by the second moon, when the morning star breaks the day, we will be in Hochelaga, at the convent gate."

Without waiting for a reply the old woman rose and walked into the other apartment whence returning in a minute or two, she said:

* Hochelaga was the name of the Indian Village found by Jacques Cartier, on the place where Montreal now stands; and the Indians, when talking among themselves, give it that name still.

"We go to Hochelaga with the first moon; my husband will borrow a fresh horse, he will go to the Curé."

While she was yet speaking, the old Indian passed the window in search of a fresh horse and the letter from the Curé, the old woman meantime busying herself in boiling potatoes for their evening meal. The girl still kept her seat on the floor as if she expected Mrs. Percy to speak, finding after the lapse of a few minutes that this was not the case, she said:

"He-aw-ha is glad you go to Hochelaga."

"I dare say," responded Mrs. Percy. "She has had much trouble with me."

"No," replied the girl, in a quick tone, such as an Indian woman seldom uses, "you give little trouble and pay much, your brother gives ten dollars for four weeks pay, she could not find ten dollars in ten weeks by making baskets, and she is too old now to make bead-work, her eyes are weak, shall I tell what makes He-aw-ha glad?"

"Yes, I should like to know," was the reply.

"This is the time our camp goes West to hunt, last year He-aw-ha not go because you here."

"When do you go?" inquired her listener of the girl, with an anxious beating of the heart; it seemed as if God Himself had interposed to remove her out of Bertram Percy's power.

"With the third moon from this all the hunters who go West will be at the Lake of Two Mountains.

Mamondagokwa and his squaw will meet them there before the stars come out when the sun has gone to rest," was the reply of the Indian girl.

"Will your grandfather have time to be there by the third moon if he takes me to Montreal?" inquired Mrs. Percy with some anxiety.

"Oh yes" was the girl's reply. "Before the sun is high in the clouds above the cedars," as she spoke pointing through the open window to the trees which grew close by, and towered above the little cottage; "they will be back from Hochelaga, and then they can pack up their things and go to the Lake of Two Mountains; I will stay to help them."

"Will they take these things with them?" inquired Mrs. Percy, pointing to the chair on which she sat, the bed, table, chest, the only furniture the room contained.

"No" replied the girl, "but they will leave them with some one to take care of; if they did not, the Canadians would steal them."

"When will you be back from the hunting ground?" asked Tiny.

"I am not going; it is only the squaws who go, and sometimes the young children they cannot leave behind them; sometimes we all go, but that is when we go for a long time and go far away."

"Do you like to go?" inquired Mrs. Percy.

"Oh yes," replied the girl earnestly. "It is so happy being there; no baskets nor bead-work to make then; I wish they were going on a long hunt."

"How long will they remain away at this hunt?"

"No one knows that but the braves; they never tell the squaws any thing like that, and even the braves do not know very well themselves, because the Chiefs will everything, and if they think it best to remain after the snow falls, they just tell the braves and it is all settled, perhaps they will come back before the snow falls, perhaps not till it is all over and gone."

"How is it you speak such good English? Do many of the young Indian girls do so?"

"Oh no, I do not know one who speaks such good English as I do, but nearly all speak a little French, He-wa-ha speaks good French. I was a long time living with English people, that is how I learnt it."

"Did you like to live with the English?"

"Yes," returned the girl in a tone very like "no;" "I liked them very well, they were very kind to me and gave me plenty of nice things to eat, but it was terrible lonesome living with them, I was never out more than two or three times in a day, never once out a whole day, or did any one I lived with go out for a whole day, but yet it was good for me I was with them, I can read and write besides speaking English, but Oh! such a lonesome time, I would not go back among them for all the world."

"Why did you go to live with them?" inquired Mrs. Percy, feeling now an interest in the girl's story.

"My mother was at Hochelaga for a few days, and one day I wandered from her on the streets and when I could not find my mother I wandered away and away out of the town until it was dark, and a man brought me home to his house; he had several children and I lived with them until one year we were all going to Cacouna—the day after we came there we saw a camp of Indians on the sea-beach; I ran up to the camp and the first person I saw was my mother—Oh! she was so glad, and I cried I was so happy; that day I went into the sea and swam for hours, I never had a swim all the time I was with the English people."

"Did the English people not wish you to remain with them? Did they come to see you?"

"Yes, they came after me when I ran to the camp, and they came often afterwards; they liked me and I liked them, but I liked my mother better, and my mother told them she would not let me go back to them, and she showed them the same mark on my arm as there was on all my brothers and sisters, a mark she put on herself when we were only a few days old, so they did not ask me again."

"Did you never see them afterwards?"

"Oh! yes, the children used to come to see me every day, they brought me all my clothes and many presents, and they wished me to go to the house they lived in at Cacouna to see them, but I was afraid they would keep me, and I never went."

The Indian went and returned from the Curé's house near the village, in about half the time it took Captain Percy to come from the village to the cottage, although he had in returning borrowed Monsieur Joinnette's horse and waggon to take Mrs. Percy into Montreal.

The Curé at once gave him a letter to the Superior of the nuns of the Convent of the Holy Cross, requesting them to take charge of Mrs. Percy, whom he denominated Madam Smith, telling the Indian that if he were there by six in the morning, the lady would be admitted; this was exactly what the Indian wanted, his time was short he must be at the Lake of Two Mountains ere the close of the third day, and he determined to set off for Montreal by three o'clock in the morning, so as to deliver his charge by the first opening of the convent gates, or in more explicit terms, at the earliest hour they were permitted to be opened.

The Holy Cross is a convent of cloistered nuns who devote themselves to the care of the sick, the rules of which are very strict, and the good natured Curé did his best to make the Indian understand how he was to proceed previous to his (the Curé's) letter being delivered to the Superior, after that, all would be easy.

Monsieur Joinnette not only lent his horse and waggon, but when he found the purpose it was wanted for, added also two large buffalo robes, that as he expressed it—"the poor lady might be kept as easy as possible, and guarded against taking cold."

All were astir early in the Indian's cottage, the morning was lovely, and the fresh smell from the fir and cedar trees waving above their heads as they passed through the bush, seemed to give new life to the poor invalid who had never once left the room appropriated to her in the cottage since the day she was first brought there by Captain Percy. Her baby's grave lay in sight of, and at a little distance from the window where she always sat, and after she was placed in the waggon, she turned with tearful eyes that she might once more look on the little mound where her darling slept, the last tie which held her to earth.

"Farewell my little darling," said she, "perhaps they will let me lie by thee, if so, I will soon be back again."

The stars were dying out one by one as they wound along the road towards the Bord-à-Plouff, and ere they reached the Lachapelle bridge, the sun was rising in all the glory of a summer morning. Butterflies and humming birds shining in green and scarlet were seeking their dainty food among the rich blossoms of the locust tree, and the scarcely ripe bunches of the vine like crimson wild cherry. The broad river swept onward in its clear calm beauty, the bright shadows from the sun's early rays flitting lightly on its bosom, the waters leaping their mimic rapids in joyous sport as if a sore or heavy heart had never crossed the stream. A red breast and his mate flew from an elm, and darting upwards, filled the air with their joyous thrilling notes; the very

insects were humming a song of joy, all nature was glad in the light of Him who made them..

The holy influence of the early morn and its surroundings fell like balm from heaven on the weary heart of the poor invalid, strengthening and refreshing both soul and body. Verily as old George Herbert saith, "Mornings are mysteries." "Heaven's gate opens when the world's is shut"—and her soul lifted itself up in gratitude and praise to the Great All Father for the deliverance He had wrought, in setting her free thus wondrously and by such simple means, from the power of the wicked man who called her wife. For the Heaven sent dream coming in a time of such sore need, and bringing with it strength and hope, which she had not known in all those long weary years since she parted with her mother at the door of her old home.

And the words spoken then, the last she was ever to hear from her mother's voice on earth; those words had come back and back so often to her in the starvation of heart by which she was surrounded, from that hour increasing day by day, until culminated in the lonely woe and weariness of the Indian's hut, when she saw her baby, the last thing left to love, laid in her sight under the grassy mound by her window. These old words seemed now to ring in her ears, "Remember, Margaret, should the time ever come when you feel that you are not better loved by those around you, than you will always be in the old home, come back to it." Alas! while the words

were still warm on her mother's lips, her heart instinctively told her, that time had already come; and a few months later, she had to hide the bitter knowledge that she was only endured, a disagreeable incumbrance, because the large drafts of money constantly sent by her mother, were necessary to the gratification of Captain Percy's love of display, and passion for gambling.

When she would have gone home, Captain Percy determinedly set his face against her doing so, and then, it was too late; her mother dead, there was no home to go to; her children dead—their very inheritance passed into the hands of strangers.

By one of those mysterious influences brought to us by the ministering angels, a love of life had been renewed in her soul, and not only that, but if it were possible, a strong desire to see, once more, the walls of her old home; the graves where her mother and children lay. As long as she was in Captain Percy's power, she felt that this was impossible—he never would permit it—he had told her so, often and often, long before the time when her remittances from home ceased. And after that, his bitter mocking reply to her earnest entreaties that she might go to Scotland, was—"Most surely, provide the money, you may go to-morrow."

Since the eventful yesterday, at least one step had been made towards the accomplishment of her purpose; in a few hours she would be the inmate of a cloistered convent, within the precincts of which he could not set his foot; when he returned to the

Indian's hut, on the third day—as he had threatened he would—he would find it empty, the Indian and his wife both gone; the most natural conclusion for him to arrive at, was that she filled a suicide's grave; he would carefully avoid going to the Curé—the only person who could tell him anything concerning her—lest he should be asked to restore the money for her funeral expenses, which he had possessed himself of on his last visit to Isle Jesus.

The Indian had carefully followed the line of way pointed out to him by the Curé, rounded the base of the mountain, passed through the toll-gate leading to the St. Joseph Faubourg, from thence ascending the mountain by Guy, and passing to the eastern Faubourg, through St. Catherine street, in which they now found themselves.

The citizens were here and there beginning to rouse themselves from the preceding night's repose; now and then, an active housemaid would appear coming forth from gentlemen's houses, as they passed, with water-pail and broom, that she might sweep and pour water on the pavement in front of her master's door, thereby making it cool as well as clean for the first hours of the morning; more than one of these turned to look with pitying eyes on the pale face of the sick looking white woman, riding beside an Indian in his cart. A cart loaded with ice passed by, and the carter, a jolly-looking Irishman, called out—"Hullo, Caugh-na-waugh-ga, where did you pick up that white wife? Why dont you feed her

better, man?" A little further on, a lady plainly dressed in mourning, was busily employed watering some flower plants, in a narrow *parterre* in front of one of the terrace houses; as the waggon approached, she stopped her work for the instant, and looking up, gazed with a look of more than common interest, on the beautiful pale face passing before her; the large dark-grey eyes and pale-brown hair being strongly contrasted by the black crape bonnet worn at the back of the head, so as to form a sort of frame-work to the face, a fashion which had passed away two years before. The lady's face, as she continued to gaze on Mrs. Percy, while the waggon approached slowly; the pace the Indian held the horse to, lest a quicker motion might shake the invalid; the wondering expression of her face almost speaking the feelings which passed through her mind, while continuing to look with rivetted eyes on the face which seemed to be that of some one she knew—and yet she did not—a face so familiar, and yet, when or where seen before, she could not call to remembrance; the very bonnet worn so at the back of the head seemed in her memory fresh as yesterday. Could it have been in a dream? Where was it seen before? Such were the questions she asked herself as she stood looking after the waggon until it disappeared from her view. For an instant, she thought of the voice so clearly heard the night before, waking her from sleep, and causing her to shudder amid the darkness; 'twas but for a moment, she dismissed it

from her mind, ashamed of such superstitious weakness.

That passing pale face, that black crape bonnet were at intervals before Miss St. Clare's eyes and occupied her mind for hours; suddenly in the evening of the same day the vision which that head and face called up to her mind's eye, came up from the storehouse of her memory; it was the likeness in life of the last pictured face of Mrs. Percy which had come from India—the bonnet, one which had been sent from Edinburgh, when Lady Gordon's last surviving Uncle died!

When this conviction at last forced itself upon her, it came sharp as lightning; as a barbed and poisoned arrow. Could it be possible that this was Mrs. Percy in very deed? Was Doctor Balfour right after all? and had she by her obtuseness, her innate stupidity, lost a chance which might never more be hers? This question she asked herself again and again, and then when the first impulse of feeling had passed away, she discarded the thought, seeing clearly, how utterly ridiculous such a supposition was. Mrs. Percy riding in a coarse country waggon with an Indian, at best a half savage; no, impossible, the very idea of such a thing was too preposterous to be entertained for an instant; it was true the face was delicate and refined, as even Mrs. Percy's might have been, but so is the face of the poorest servant girl, when worn down by long sickness, as the one which passed in the morning evidently was, and she smiled, as she thought

were she to give the reins to her imagination to what heights of folly it might lead her, soliloquizing with herself, "It is fortunate this likeness did not strike me more vividly at once; I am so impulsive, I would probably have gone after the waggon and asked the sick woman, if her name was not Mrs. Percy."

Alas! this terrible unbelief which the evil spirits who beset our path, know how to play with now, just as well as the serpent did when he tempted our mother, thousands of years ago; We would walk by sight, not by Faith, and we ask each other,

"Why is it not so?—Why does God hide Himself so wondrously?—Why is the exercise of this almost unattainable faith desired of us?"—and yet when sight is given, we wrap ourselves in the mantle of our own reason, and say with sceptical souls, "It is not reality—it is a mere vision of the night—a vague dream"—or if palpably before our eyes in the day time, we have recourse to another hypothesis—"The retina of the eye is diseased—and thence plays tricks with our imagination—It is true the word of God tells us that Gabriel appeared unto the man greatly beloved—that Jacob wrestled with another of God's messengers until the break of day—the Bible is full of such things from beginning to end—but these are all met by the glib sophistry of the *nineteenth century*—"such things might have been in an earlier stage of our existence when men's minds were not so far advanced in science; knowledge now

runneth to and fro, they are unnecessary ; and as to being tempted of the devil in this self-enlightened age, it is met with a sneer and laugh at the poor ignorant man or woman who dares uphold such a superstitious unreasonable doctrine.

It would have been well for her if she had indeed run after the waggon, and asked that question ; it would have most likely saved her from the great woe of her life, a woe that made her hair grey in her youth, and haunted her as the nightmare of her dreams in middle age.



As the waggon passed the house with its *parterre* of flowers, Mrs. Percy became painfully conscious of being an object of scrutiny to the lady who a second or two previous was so busily occupied in watering her flowers ; the words used by the man with the ice-cart,—the sympathizing face of the servant girl,—came back to her remembrance, showing but too plainly there was something about herself, the waggon, or the Indian, which excited the observation she was so anxious to avoid ; she had been so much accustomed to the Indians during her long residence in their hut, and their conduct had been so kind and gentle towards her, that she never once thought there could be anything to excite surprise in a white woman riding in the same waggon with an Indian ; she rather suspected it was her own sickly-looking face which attracted attention to the waggon, so in

order to put a stop to this unpleasant scrutiny, she drew her veil, which had during the morning hung over the back of her bonnet, round to her face, doubling it in front and drawing her black shawl closely up to her neck, she felt secure that now no one could know whether her face was sickly or healthy, that of a white woman or an Indian.

She had very soon cause for thankfulness that she had so muffled herself up; a few minutes had only elapsed ere Captain Percy issued from the door of a handsome boarding-house, carrying his fishing-rod, and followed by—could it be possible?—could that young woman looking so ill-tempered, and talking so sharply and familiarly to Captain Percy, be really Abigail Smith?—Yes, it was most certainly Abigail Smith's voice and face; she had full opportunity given her of noting both.

As Captain Percy emerged from the house, he called out in a surly tone "Come on quickly; wont you, or we'll be late;" he walked with a quick step, and on the instant, his back was towards the waggon. As Abigail descended the steps in front of the house door, she replied in a sharp insolent voice, the tones of which were so familiar to Mrs. Percy's ear, those accents of low-bred, haughty insolence under which she had too often winced in India and New-York:

"I'll come when it suits me, if you are in such a hurry, you should have taken a carriage; you are more saving of your shillings now, than you used to be of your pounds in New-York; I always thought

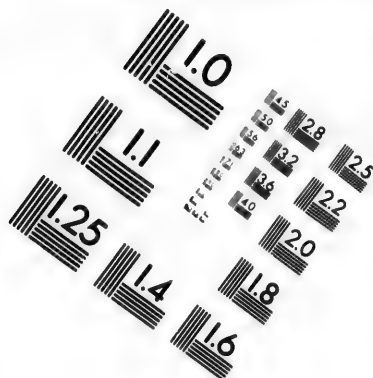
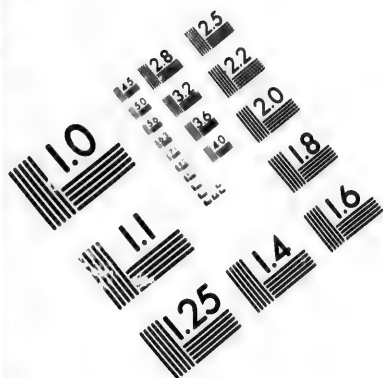
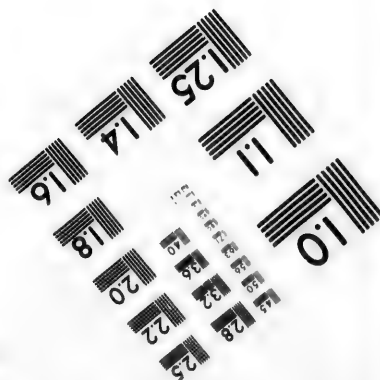
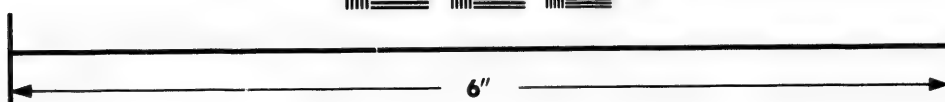
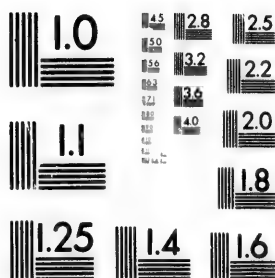


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a carriage to take one to the cars was a necessity till now, but I'm learning something new every day here."

As she spoke she looked at the waggon, turning for a second and gazing with a face of wonder at the Indian, thereby giving a full opportunity to Mrs. Percy of scanning her face; that face engraven on Tiny's memory in lines of fire. She joined Captain Percy and they both walked quickly on, to Tiny's great relief, turning down one of the cross streets leading to the town.

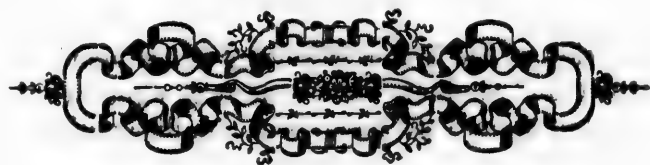
What a flood of light the encounter with this man and woman had poured into her soul; the man, her husband; the woman once her waiting-maid; now the great mystery of the last two years was solved; she knew well now why she would not be permitted to return to her Scottish home; why she was immured in a living grave with a half savage man and woman for her keepers; why she was to be made the instrument of her own destruction; Verily, it is not "the dark places of the earth," alone, that "are full of the habitations of cruelty.

The Indian proceeded along St. Catherine street, nearly a mile after passing the house from which Captain Percy and Abigail issued before he came to the street he was desired to turn up, and in which last the convent of The Holy Cross was situated; it was at last gained, and they halted in front of a building, so large, that wearied as Tiny was, she could not bear the additional fatigue of looking at it from

every side, as the Indian was doing in his wondering surprise, and as others have done with equal wonder and admiration, who have been familiar with such establishments on the continent of Europe.

The Indian rang the bell, according to the Curé's orders; in a few minutes, a lay nun appeared at a little wicket, in the gate, just large enough for her to see who had rung the bell and enquire into his business, the Curé's letter was delivered into her hand, and in a few minutes another larger wicket was opened, the lay nun who first answered the summons of the bell, and another similarly attired, came forth, and gently lifting the invalid from the waggon, placed her in the hands of two other nuns inside the wicket door; a bell sounded inside, the wicket was again closed; an iron bar put across inside; the Indian turned his waggon, and in an hour afterwards had left the town far behind on his way back to Isle Jesus.





CHAPTER XV.

CAPTAIN Percy turned from the Indian's cottage, after leaving with the woman whom he had once vowed to love and cherish all her life long, that poison brought from Europe's distant land, that it might usher her shivering unprepared soul into an unknown eternity, to meet the God whose commandment she had broken by her last act on earth. He had only walked a few steps, towards the path leading through the bush, when a thought struck him, he would retrace his steps and going round by the other side of the hut, endeavour to see without being seen, what Tiny seated at the open window was about, whether the blue bottle with its deadly contents still lay on the table untouched. Fortune favored him; on turning the corner of the hut he found that a great cedar forming two large trunks which sprung from one root, and grew so closely together as only here and there to admit a line of light, formed a sort of screen between himself and the occupant of the window, so near that he could by applying his eye to the space between the trunks, with ease see, and if need be, hear what passed within, the soft mossy nature of

the grass effectually preventing the slightest sound from his foot-fall being heard.

What he saw was perfectly satisfactory ; his wife leant forward over the table, the blue glove-bottle he had placed there a few moments previous, in her hand ; she was in the act of lifting it up, he saw her raise the stopper, as if to look inside, and he heard distinctly her murmured words, " It is an easy way out of all my trouble."—

He was satisfied ; he had seen enough ; in a few minutes more she would be struggling in strong convulsions, foaming at the mouth with the death rattle in her throat ; he had no wish to see that, no, he would spare himself that sight, he had enough of such horror, he would not expose himself to this. Years ago long ere his first foot-fall fell with its blasting blight on Lady Gordon's threshold he shot his friend, the friend at whose board he had been a welcome guest, and whose young wife he had entrapped into infamy and misery. He had stood looking on, while this man's soul went uncalled to meet his Creator in the far eternity ; he had stood spell-bound, as his victim sprung into the air, and then fell with a heavy stone-like sound on the rocky beach, he looked on with a fascination which held him in its fangs and would not let him go, but kept him gazing there with transfixed staring eyes, while the lower limbs of the dying man were drawn spasmodically up to his writhing body, his arms tossed about, vainly beating the air, his head

rolling from side to side, the eyes staring wildly in his slayer's face, the lips drawn tightly back, disclosing set teeth through which the life blood came oozing forth; that face came back to him in his guilty dreams, the face so close to his own that he felt the blood on his cheek, and would wake in the dark night, shivering with a horror he dared not name; No, much as he desired her death; long as he had looked forward to it, and tried to bribe others to commit the guilty act, he dared not himself do, yet he would not witness another death scene, would not risk a new night horror being added to the one which at times he feared would make him a raving madman.

Impelled by the dread of witnessing the scene which he knew must quickly follow the lifting, by the half palsied hand, of that poisoned bottle, he withdrew from behind the cedar tree with as much haste as was consistent with due exercise of caution, lest the least unwonted sound should startle his poor victim, and turn her from her resolution. He remembered now, with a grim satisfaction, the last time he had been at the Indian's hut, when he came through the winter snow, the bearer of his own letter, informing her that both her children were dead, when desiring the Indian to deliver it instantly, he had waited outside this very window, and heard the groan which told him his lies had been read and believed. "That letter did a good work," said he, "without the information it contained, she would

have clung to life, if only in hopes of seeing these cubs again."

Already had the storm of wind commenced, and finding it impossible to keep his onward way, struggle as he would, he flung himself on the ground at a little distance from the hut, there to wait until the violence of the storm had passed away. He had thrown himself directly in the line of the storm, and as it bent the pine trees under which he lay, their broken boughs, swept by the whirlwind, came rioting with their sharp pines and hard cones over his prostrate body, making him fain to hide his face from their contact, in the sterile ground, the invariable bed of the fir tree; then came those terrific peals of thunder already described, which seemed to his guilty soul to concentrate around the spot where he lay, as if commissioned to summon him before that awful tribunal, of which with his ribald companions he had so often made a mockery and scorn, and he shuddered in horror of soul as he felt his own impotency to strive against the mighty power of God; he believed that his wife was now a lifeless piece of clay, and that the avenger of blood was on his track.

The rain fell in torrents, soaking him to the skin, but the thunder, which spoke of the wrath of the Almighty so loudly to his guilty soul, had passed away, and the pouring rain was simply an inconvenience.

He believed that the Indian and his wife on their return in the evening, would find Tiny a corpse,

without suspecting other cause than the consummation of her disease, which he had from the very first impressed on their minds was sure to come, and which he himself had been led to expect long before by the opinion of every medical man whom he had consulted; at same time he knew on the morrow they would be sure to apply to the Curé for the money so long promised, and which the Priest had no longer in his possession; he must provide against any evil which the knowledge of this on their part might give rise to; the Curé also must be led to believe that the storm had prevented him from reaching the Indian's hut, lest a suspicion of the truth, or something near it, might be excited in the minds of either the Curé or the Indians.

Taking his way therefore to the Priest's house, he showed himself in his wet clothes, saying that walking leisurely along, he had been overtaken by the storm while still a long way from the bush, that he had vainly sought shelter by trying first one side and then the other of the old wall of the ruined cottage, and at last abandoned all idea of going to see his invalid sister in his present wet state, that he would return on the day after the morrow to pay the Indian the board now due, and to remove his sister, as he had now come to the resolution of bringing her with him to Europe, in hopes that her native air might yet restore her.

He well knew the Curé would tell all this to the Indians on their applying to him for the money, and

while the certainty of receiving their money in two days would keep them quiet, it would give him time to receive the sum from his sister by the British Mail expected on the morrow, and also, what in his present excited state of mind was a vital consideration, give the Indians ample time to bury his dead out of his sight, ere he would arrive again.

The simple Curé sympathized with him on having had such a mishap as to be caught in the storm, offered to have his clothes dried, which Captain Percy politely declined, on the plea that he had business in Montreal, which required his presence early in the evening, and must therefore make the best of his time, and change his clothes on his arrival there. This was however a line of conduct he never once thought of adopting, his 'creature comforts' were always with Captain Percy of the very first importance, and on his arrival at the *auberge* he at once requested the landlord to provide him with a change of raiment, so that his soaking garments might be dried, while he indulged in a little brandy and water, a cigar and a newspaper, to which he applied himself, partaking more freely than usual of his favorite brandy, that he might banish from his mind the image of the clay cold dead thing, he believed to be lying within the window of the Indian's hut.

The brandy had its usual soothing, or otherwise speaking, stupifying effect; the difficulties which lay in his path gradually disappeared, until he persuaded

himself into the belief that his sister's letter, with its remittance, would be waiting for him on his return to his boarding house, and pleasing himself with the idea, that once possessed of this money, he could, after settling with the Indian, and so getting rid of all fear of detection as to his conduct toward Tiny, at once proceed to New York, where he might soon make fifty pounds into so many hundreds; he had done it before, why not now?

Such were the meditations which occupied his mind as he neared Montreal, and driving along by one of the lower streets, so that he might tell the livery people from whom he had hired the horse and vehicle, to send for it, he encountered a crowd at the corner of one of the cross streets which obliged him to halt for a second or two. Picking her way through the crowd and passing close to his carriage, came a young lady whose face troubled him not a little; she was the same whom his wife pointed out to him when they dined at Island Pond, on their way from Portland to Montreal; he answered his wife's question regarding her at that time by some light badinage, yet he suspected then, what he was sure of now, that it was the same face he saw looking at him in the mirror in Lady Gordon's drawing-room, as he pointed his finger in derision at Tiny's pictured face; poor as he was he would have given all the money in his pocket, and braved the anger of his landlady, to know certainly if he was right in his conjecture, and if so, what brought

her to Canada? He well knew that it was Lady Gordon's intention to have gone to India to seek her daughter; he was well aware, cover it as Mr. Morton would, by asking his permission to have the grave opened, etcetera, that it was no grave Lady Gordon had she lived, would have gone to India to seek out, but her living daughter, in the story of whose death the terms of her will showed she had never believed. Could such a thing be possible as their having found out that Tiny was brought to New York, and thence to Montreal? to guard against this he had assumed the names of Mr. and Mrs. Smith, from the day they landed in Bombay, from whence they had sailed in a French vessel to a French port, and again in another French ship to New York; he was sick of Tiny long before they left India, and all his plans were well laid to prevent the possibility of detection. No one could have told of their ever having been in America, except Abby, and she was made thoroughly aware of the importance of concealing the fact; she knew that were Lady Gordon to become aware of her daughter having left India alive, all hope of succeeding to any part of her wealth would be over for ever; besides he had never left Abby alone, except the day of Lady Gordon's funeral, and then she assured him she had not spoken one word to any one, and he had so often impressed on her during those two days not to speak to any stranger whatever.

This then was certainly not within the bounds of

probability, and even if it were so, was it likely they would send a young woman to find out what a clever lawyer could have so much better accomplished? "No," he argued, "if she is the person I suspect, she must have lost her situation on Lady Gordon's death, and come here to obtain one, but if I am right in supposing that she is the person I saw at Lady Gordon's, I am also correct in thinking that she recognized me on board the cars, and that she did so as she passed me within the last minute, or else mistook me for some one she wished to avoid, there is not the shadow of a doubt; she absolutely started as her eyes met mine; if I can spare time before I leave for New York after I get the affair with this Indian settled, I must certainly, for my own satisfaction, try to find out who the young woman is, and what brought her to Montreal; if I find her residence here has any reference to my affairs, she had better have remained eating her brose and porridge in "the land of cakes and brither Scots;" by my faith I'll make this land too hot to hold her, or perhaps contrive to give her lodgings where she'll pay no board; it would be quite an exciting little job, and I don't think a very difficult one, to give a philter to one of those half mad pride and poverty Scotchwomen, that would set helter skelter the little brains they ever have, and make them fit subjects for a madhouse during the rest of their natural lives. Although these Scotch have nine lives like a cat, there is no possibility of killing them

How I do hate the whole race of the psalm singing hypocrites."

The last sentence was unconsciously uttered aloud, and enforced by giving a cut with the whip to his horse, which sent him pell mell along the street, until he found himself at the door of the livery stable.

Captain Percy changed his mind as to riding home and having his horse and vehicle sent for, preferring to walk, in hopes he might again see *the face that troubled him*, and so be enabled to trace her to her home, as a first step to ascertaining who she was, and if it interested him, learning what the business was which brought her to Montreal.

He walked along in the direction which he had seen the young lady take, in hopes of overtaking her, but without success; *the face that troubled him* was not to be seen.

On entering his boarding house he went straight up to the bedroom allotted to himself and his wife, where the latter generally sat, except during meals, or when she occasionally paid a visit to an American lady, whose chamber was situated on the same flat as her own; she was now busily engaged in altering the arrangement of the flowers on a green silk dress which had evidently seen its best days; this dress had some time since been declared "only fit for rainy days and odd times," but since their arrival in Montreal, Captain Percy had always declared himself too busy to go in search of the baggage left at the Grand Trunk depot, and consequently Abby had

been reduced to three dresses, and these none of the best, her travelling dress and two others, that in order not to crush those in her trunks, she had stuffed into a carpet bag. The want of those two trunks occasioned many quarrels between Captain Percy and Abby, but still the trunks lay at the railway depot, and Abby strongly suspected what was the truth, that her trunks were handed over to the Conductor until the fare from Portland could be paid; this would have been no easy matter, as until now, when the hundred dollars were taken from the Curé, as a last resource, to prevent their being turned out on the street, he had not had twenty dollars in his possession since he entered Montreal.

As Captain Percy entered the room where she, whom we must now call his wife, sat, he flung himself into the only easy chair which it boasted, saying, as he did so:—

“I have made a good day’s work of it, but I am quite used up; I had to walk upwards of fourteen miles, besides my long drive, which tires one nearly as much as walking on these horrible Canadian roads, before I could get my money, but I am thankful to say I got it at last; I hope our luck is going to take a turn for the better now, and be as good for the next year as it has been bad for the past.”

“I am sure I hope it is,” replied his wife, “for I hate to be poor; I never knew what poverty was all my life, and never wanted good clothes till now. When I was in Mrs. Douglass’s I had sixteen dresses,

all of them silk, satin, or Irish poplin, besides lots of worsteds, muslins and calicoes, and now I'm ashamed to be seen ; I have not a decent dress to my back ; I don't wonder people are afraid to trust us, when they see the old rags I wear, and know that we have no baggage ; if something does not turn up soon, I'm going to take a place in a shop ; I heard of a place to-day where I can get a hundred pounds a year, and I'll like that much better than taking a situation, because I'll have my evenings after seven o'clock, and my Sundays to myself."

" Hold your tongue, Abby," said her husband, in an angry tone ; " there is no use in talking that way ; you know very well that if we had only enough to buy one meal a day, I never would permit my wife to serve in a shop ; what do you imagine would any of my brother officers think were they to see you so employed ? This run of ill luck is over now, and I must take care it does not come again. By the way," said he, suddenly changing his tone to a cheerful accent, " What news do you think I heard to-day ? Our regiment is coming out to Canada ; I think I shall join again."

This was a direct falsehood ; he had not heard of his regiment, as he called it, coming to Canada, and even if it did, he well knew he could not join it, nor would he, if he could ; having sullied his rank by marrying his wife's servant, he would have been sent to Coventry by every officer in the regiment, but for a private reason of his own, he wished to get

Abby into good humor, and he knew there was nothing so likely to effect this as the prospect of his again joining his regiment, and she becoming thereby an officer's lady; the bait took instantly, and she exclaimed, with sparkling eyes, and an almost joyous tone of voice—

“Oh! I wish you would; there is nobody in the world so happy as an officer's wife; I'm sure all the unmarried officers would have done anything in the world for Mrs. Douglasso or Mrs. Percy; when do you think they are coming? are they coming to Montreal, or where? I shall count the days till they come. One good thing, I am very glad Colonel Douglasso has retired; Mrs. Douglasso is such a proud woman, I am sure she would not ask me to her parties, although I count myself just as good as her; they say Colonel Douglasso's folks are poor enough, but of course she had a large fortune of her own, and that made her proud, and her sister was married to a baronet; she was Lady Philpots; Mrs. Douglasso visited there when she was in Ireland, before we came out to India, and her maid showed me all her jewels; she had such splendid things! a whole set of rubies and émeralds, and such a pearl necklace, with pearls as large as” she had nearly said “Mrs. Percy's, but she remembered that any allusion to Mrs. Percy's jewels was always fraught with ill humor, and she adroitly changed the sentence into “as large as anything.”

He allowed her to run on talking in this style,

and with the prospect of joining the regiment as a Captain's lady, she soon talked herself into good humor.

"I had better give you the money to pay our greedy landlady; did she favor you with any more impertinence?"

"No, but my bed was not made, nor the slops emptied till past two o'clock. I let her pass with it to-day, because I was afraid of another talking to about the board money, but if my room is not made up bright and early to-morrow, I'll give her a good rowing, I can tell you; now she has raised my bile, I'll make her pony up; I'm not going to sit all day in a miserable place like this, and the bed not made."

"Quite right," said Captain Percy, as he proceeded to take the notes from his pocket book to pay the landlady, and thinking at same time, as he glanced round the large well furnished bedroom where they sat, that although Abby chose to designate it as 'miserable,' yet it formed a striking contrast to any one he had ever known her to occupy until she became his wife. "There are forty eight dollars; that pays for the weeks in arrear and for the one running on; now take care she gives you a receipt."

"Never fear, I'm well up to all that, but I'm real glad to get the money to pay her; they are all so impudent here; I would not stay a day longer in the house but for that American lady; she is such good company, and we were so lonesome in the other

houses ; What do you think I heard the servant saying to the girl of the house, while they were making up Mr. Rogers' room ? The door of my room was open, and so was his, and they saw me sitting here as they passed, so they knew very well I must hear every word they said. They began speaking of all the boarders, and praising Mrs. Taft, like anything, and then the servant said, 'If I was Mrs. Smith, I'd rather take and sell that fine gold watch and chain, with its rows of pearls, that she is so vain of, hanging outside her dress, and pay for what I eat ; I would not cheat anybody out of my meat, and go sailing about with gold watches and fine brooches, as she does,' " was'nt that awful impertinence ? "

"It was," replied Captain Percy, his face flushing as he spoke. "But sometimes those low people, in their insolence, speak very plain truths ; you know I have often told you not to wear your watch outside your dress,—a lady never does,—you never saw"—he would have added "Mrs. Percy wear her watch so," but some hidden chord that vibrates in every human breast, the base and depraved, the lofty and noble alike, was touched, ringing out clearly from the store-house of his memory. His eyes were gathering in the details of Abby's dress, from the immense puffs of shining black hair towering on the back of her head, set off by rosettes of scarlet velvet, near which, although not in keeping, were the exquisitely wrought brooch and earrings given to Tiny by her mother, the last hour they ever spent

together; downwards over the light grey batiste dress, spotted with scarlet and trimmed with fringed silk ruchings of the same color; at her waist hung Tiny's watch, with its rows of encircling pearls, the chain of which, diverted from its original use by the fancy of the wearer, was tied round her waist above the scarlet sash, giving a look of display to her whole costume; the dress short enough to expose extremely high heeled shoes, with immense leather bows and buckles. To his mind's eye, was pictured out in clearer colors and truer lines than mortal painter ever drew, Tiny, as he saw her the last time she ever wore that watch, those ornaments; her finely shaped head devoid of ornament, save those earrings and her own pale brown curls, her simple morning dress of white muslin, just touching the ground, and fastened at the throat by the very brooch he now saw; under the pink waist-band lay concealed her pearled watch, its presence only guessed from the chain hanging lightly round her neck; and in contrast to this fair vision, was another, conjured up and pictured out with a sterner and sharper pencil,—the window of the Indian's hut, where still lay untouched that cold dead thing of fear! all this passed before him mentally in a second of time; he stopped speaking; the sentence was left unfinished.

Abby's face flushed up with nearly as deep a dye as the trimmings of her dress, and her pretty black eyes snapped with anger, as, hastily unfastening her watch and throwing it on the table, she said:

"Take your old watch, I don't want it; I know very well what you were going to say, and I don't want to hear it; if Mrs. Percy pleased you so well, why didn't you let herself hear a little of it; there wasn't many sweet words passed between you that ever I heard, but I heard plenty as sour as vinegar, and if you liked her manners and her ways so much better than mine, why didn't you go to Scotland for another Scotch wife? I saw no lack of old maids when I was there, and I'm sure I didn't force myself on you; I kept you at your distance, you can't deny, and threatened to tell Mrs. Percy more than once of your on-goings. I wish I had; I wouldn't have been here now, but would have been far better off—and worse than that, you can't deny that you asked me to marry you before your wife was dead; I wouldn't be surprised to hear some day that you had poisoned her."

Captain Percy rose from the recumbent position he had maintained since his entrance, and went slowly towards his wife, his very lips ashy white with suppressed rage; she saw she had gone too far, and a little afraid of what was coming, retreated a few steps as he advanced towards her, but this time there was no escape; she had overstepped the mark, and seizing her arm between the elbow and shoulder, with a grasp of iron, the pain of which made her wince, he exclaimed, in low deep tones, which betrayed his passion more than the loudest voice could have done:—

"Woman, hold that infernal tongue of yours, or I shall beat you, both bones and flesh to a jelly ; it was an evil day I first saw you, you brawling low wretch."

"I'm not a low wretch," she screamed at the top of her voice, endeavouring to free herself from his grasp, as she spoke ; this was not an easy matter ; he held her firmly, and her strength to his was as the willow wand to the strong Irish shillelah ; the pain of her arm enraged her, calling forth all the animal in her nature, and using her free arm, she seized a handful of his hair which she endeavoured to tear out by the roots ; "you dare to call me a low wretch, you thief, you, that stole your wife's money, and made her believe her mother was dead, so that you might steal it ; if you dont let me go, I'll scream out murder, and give you over to the police ; I know more about you than you think."

It was now his turn to rid himself of her grasp, which he did by giving her a blow on the head, which almost stunned her, and sent her reeling towards the bed on which she fell ; he then, with almost incredible coolness, walked across the room to the table where the watch lay, lifted it up, looked at the time, and putting it in his pocket, left the room, shutting the door gently after him, as if nothing unusual had occurred, taking the precaution to turn the key in the lock, and carry it along with him.

As he turned to descend the staircase, the landlady of the house, her daughter and servant, were seen coming towards him with a rush.

"Did you hear the scream?" inquired the daughter, who was foremost of the three.

"No," was the cold reply, "our windows are shut." This was said with a dignity he well knew how to assume, and addressing himself to the mistress of the house, he added—"Mrs. Smith will pay you for two weeks board when she has finished dressing.

He stood, showing the women he did so, waiting for them to descend, which they did unwillingly, wondering to each other where the noise could have come from. The servant girl, however, seemed able to solve the mystery, saying;

"It is just them Crawford's; they are always at something; I saw the oldest boy kick the new girl last night in the back yard; she is a green one, or she would have him in the police for it; I don't know what girls is at to serve the like of them, but no one stops more than a month in their house any how."

"It's just them," returned the landlady readily, as if the turn things had taken, removing the unseemly noise from her own house to her neighbours, was a pleasant one; "I opened all the low back windows, and the basement door, and the gallery one, to let the fresh air into the house about a half an hour ago; it's hard enough people can't open their own basement windows without being disturbed by the like of them, quarrelling and fighting; and us paying a hundred and twenty pounds for the house, besides taxes; I think Mr. Jones should look for quieter neighbours to put beside decent people, especially as he knows we

make our bread by our house ; I'm glad at any rate the Smiths did'nt hear it ; she's such a hateful proud up-setting thing, she would have been sure to say it was in the house."

Captain Percy walked rapidly along in the direction of the Mountain, so that he might be alone, and thereby be better able to calm down the anger still raging within his bosom ; he had before this come to the knowledge that his wife's temper was not one which would bear much tampering with ; this would have given him little trouble but for the fact, which in her anger she had unwittingly disclosed, that she was aware of certain past transactions of his, which until now he had believed her entirely ignorant of ; how she had acquired this information was one question he could not answer, how much she knew was another. It was true, there were letters in his possession, which, joined to the knowledge she had of their daily life in India and New-York, would have taught her much that would be dangerous to his safety, in case a breach should take place between Abby and himself, and that would be inimical to his peace as her husband under any circumstances ; but these letters were so safely guarded, it was next to impossible she could have any access to them ; besides if they were placed openly under her eye, was it at all likely that one of such a flighty, stirring disposition, would, from no other motive than idle curiosity, take the trouble of deciphering letters, many of them eight pages long, and nearly all

written in the cramped unreadable hand of an old woman? no, no, he dismissed the thought as one wholly untenable; the probability was, that she had merely suspected that such might have been the case, or more likely still, the words uttered in her anger, might have been a vague accusation, such as low bred people threaten each other with; this was evidently the case when she said "he might have poisoned his wife." That transaction was only a few hours old; no human being had either seen him come or go; the birds of the air could not carry the matter.

The longer he reasoned with himself, the more thoroughly he was convinced that the whole affair was a coincidence of speech; that to vent her rage she had accused him unconsciously of the crimes of which he was guilty; however he determined in future, to be more guarded how he would excite his wife's irascibility of temper while he remained with her; since she became his wife she had never been known as other than Mrs. Smith, except on one occasion, when his officious friend Morrison had written their joint names in the lobby book at Kay's Hotel; he was getting very tired of the life of constant shifts to which his poverty obliged him to have resort; the recrimination and ill temper to which he was subject at home being certainly not the least disagreeable part of it; and now that he was rid of Tiny, and all trouble on that score would be gone in a couple of days, he would at once, on the receipt of his sister's

letter, leave Abby to "paddle her own canoe," as he graphically expressed it to himself; he did not flatter himself she would be inconsolable for his loss; that aspect of things had passed away; the place in the shop she had spoken of, might prove a very good turn up for her, but in the meantime, in case that she really knew more than he cared she should, she must be kept in as good humor as possible; and as a first means to getting this up, he would now go to the railway depot, pay the charges on the trunks, and have them sent to her at once. He well knew from past experience, that she was dying with anxiety to show her velvets, silks and laces, (nearly all of which were gifts of Lady Gordon to her daughter) to the American friend she had picked up within the last ten days, and whom he expected her to quarrel with ere the next ten had joined the last.

Following out his intention of sending Abby her luggage, he retraced his steps, and remembering that he had locked her in to prevent a confidential communication with her friend, the American lady, on the subject of his violence, which would have been sure to have taken place had they met ere she had time to cool down a little, he took the direction of the boarding house, in order to open the bed-room door, so that she might receive her trunks, and so have recovered in a small degree from the effects of the late storm, ere he ventured to show himself in person.

On entering the house, he walked straight up to

his bedroom, and softly' putting the key in the lock, he cautiously opened the door sufficiently to see that his wife was lying asleep in bed, her head bound up in a handkerchief; the tied-up head was the least pleasing part of the picture before him; he was aware that he had given the blow with all his strength, and it would be an ugly thing if a doctor had to be sent for.

Whilst waiting at the depot, a friend whose acquaintance he had made at the billiard table, talked of going to Lachine next morning, and returning to Montreal in time for breakfast, by sailing down the rapids; this would have been a welcome break in the monotony of his present life, yesterday; to-day it was hailed as an additional peace-offering to be employed in stilling Abby's wrath; had he gone yesterday, Abby would have been left at home, it being supposed that he went on business, and in consequence it would have appeared neither convenient nor desirable that she should accompany him.

Finishing his business with the railway official, he betook himself, in company with his friend, to a billiard saloon, where he won five dollars from a young gentleman, aged twenty years, whom his friend was plucking nightly in small sums; these *debts of honor* being paid by a system of constant embezzlements, which the friend was perfectly aware would end as various other cases of the same kind had done, by placing the young gentleman within the walls of the penitentiary for a certain number of years; this

of course was talked of by those men who had been the means of sending so many of these boys to the same place, so many to death and destruction, as a disagreeable affair, but still it was a *debt of honor*. So were they "honorable men," and as one victim went in this way, they set themselves to find another, who might prove an equally profitable gull.

Captain Percy did not seek his home until past ten, and on entering, saw through the open parlor door, that his wife was there, dressed in a violet colored velvet, which had been lengthened to suit her greater height, by satin trimmings of the same shade; pink roses in her hair, and mechlin lace berthe and sleeve falls, altogether presenting the appearance of a fashionably dressed very pretty woman.

He entered with the gentlemanly ease he could well adopt when it suited his purpose, bowed, and exchanged a few words with the boarders, and then seating himself by his wife, played with her fan, as if the circumstances under which they last met had been drowned in the waters of Lethe, informing her of the engagement he had made for himself and her, to go to Lachine, in the morning of the ensuing day.

Abby still stood on her dignity; although they had quarreled many times and oft during the past three months, when scarcity of money made both cross, yet he had never dared to raise his hand against her until now, and although the possession of her trunks had somewhat made up for the ill-treatment she had received, yet her naturally high spirit determined her

in holding out against his advances for a reconciliation as long as possible, under the circumstances; and more than all, she knew that the opprobrious terms she had used in her anger were too true; any respect she had ever entertained for him was gone, and she had made up her mind, since their last interview, if there were to be any more poor days, she would not share them.

He saw that although her caution made her guard against allowing others see that a shade was on her brow, yet he had still to exert himself, in order to regain his place in her favor, a favor which for the present at least, was absolutely necessary, in case she really had a knowledge of the facts she pretended to; vanity and a love of display he had cause to know as her greatest foibles; the piano was open, but unemployed; Captain Percy walked towards the instrument, and lightly touching a few chords, asked a lady who sat near, what he should play for her? she declared herself without choice, admitting at same time she was passionately fond of all music.

Now was his time to please Abby by feeding her vanity; he was the most gentlemanly as well as the most accomplished man in the room, and turning round on the music stool so as to face his wife, he asked, while he looked admiringly in her face—

“ Shall I sing your song, dearest ? ”

Without waiting for a reply, he turned again to the instrument; and playing a brilliant introduction, poured forth the words of a fashionable love-song,

the air of which was rarely beautiful; he sang and played in his most effective style, as he had never troubled himself to do since he was Abby's husband.

His hearers were in raptures, even the gentlemen condescended to praise his music; now was his time, and going up to Abby, who he saw was listening with a proud pleased air, to the praises showered upon him, he took her hand with a gallant air, saying,

"Now I have sung your song, you must sing mine; dont take off your gloves, I will play for you."

And leading her to the piano, he played and sang with her a little Italian love-song he had himself taught her, taking care that with his own strong voice, he covered her defects.

The effect was magical; if his hearers were pleased before, they were perfectly charmed now. Mrs. Smith was eagerly questioned why she did not before let them know she sung so beautifully, and besieged with entreaties to favor them with another song.

"I am sorry" said he, taking her hand, and playing with it as he spoke, "that I cannot allow Mrs. Smith to sing again to-night; she has been suffering all the early part of the evening from severe headache, occasioned, I am sorry to say, by my own indiscretion; it was not fair in me to ask her to exert herself as she has done; Mrs. Smith's voice is one, as you have heard, of very high order, but her constitution is delicate, and hence in giving

pleasure to others by her power of song, she frequently suffers herself ; besides her nature is excitable, and were she to sing again, the exertion would probably bring on a nervous attack."

Drawing her hand within his arm as he spoke, he inquired softly, yet taking care that he should be heard by all present,

" Shall we retire, my love ? it is getting late, and you know you have promised to accompany me to Lachine tomorrow, at an early hour."

His triumph was complete ; she was an object of admiration and interest to all in the house, and she owed it all to him ; this, her greatest ambition, to be admired, to be thought an accomplished lady, had been gratified to the utmost ; if she could not forget the affair of the morning, it was at least for the present forgiven, and would not be even alluded to until the disagreeable reminiscence was brought forth by some sharp reproof of his, occasioned, by the non-observance of little conventionalities, which poor Abby had never been taught, and which probably no one except himself ever observed she was lacking in ; alas ! for poor Abby, her husband had been born and bred in a phase of society where such punctilios, from habit, become a second nature, and now, that from many causes all the irritable in his disposition was every moment alert, such derelictions from the usages of polite society, or even the want of that repose of manner, which he considered necessary to the demeanor of a lady, grated harshly

on feelings but too keenly alive; in the days of his courtship, and courtship there was to be done, he had to seek Abby's favor as sedulously, although under a different character, as ever he had done that of Lady Gordon's daughter, but in those days her faults of either omission or commission did not come under his eye; the first time he ever sat at table with Abby, was the day of his marriage, when on their return from church, they breakfasted together.

His surprise was extreme then, as on many after occasions his disgust was intense, when despite all the efforts of a polite waiter, she would heap egg-cup, laden with its white shelly burden, bread, butter, egg spoon and knife, upon the same plate; such delinquencies were never left uncommented upon, and the half smiling rebuke, administered with honeyed words in those halcyon days, was met by a corresponding good-natured laugh, dancing from bright black eyes, and setting off red prettily formed lips and white teeth, making half amends for the incessantly committed fault.

Up to the day on which Captain Percy was a listener to Lady Gordon's will, he had believed with the most simple faith, that his mother-in-law had no power, even if she had the inclination, to will away her money and land from his children, and once theirs, he had little fear that by the help of his sapient friend, Mr. Morrison, it would sooner or later pass into his own hands; this faithful ally had in the mean time helped him to various sums, obtained.

it is true, at a ruinous percentage, but with Captain Percy, the present moment was all in all.

From the time he knew he was entirely left to his own resources in providing for himself and Abby, as well as for the few dollars required to pay Tiny's board, his temper and disposition had undergone a radical change; discrepancies of Abby's which previously were passed over with a frown or an impatient pshaw! were now looked on as matters of grave import; every annoyance became a grievance, consequently their lives were now a constant scene of ill timed sharp reproof on the one side, and of insolent rejoinder on the other, generally finishing off with "I think myself as good as you," allusions to "pride and poverty," and such like.

On the following morning they were early astir, in order to be in time for the trip to Lachine, and as we have seen, thereby almost came in contact with Tiny and her Indian guide on their way to the hospital.

On board the steamboat, Abby's attention was much attracted by Baptiste, the Indian pilot, who always takes charge of the steamboats in passing over the rapids, no white man having yet been found able to perform this hazardous office. Although she had now been a considerable time in Montreal, the Indian met in the morning was the first red man she had ever seen; to her eyes, unaccustomed to the red skin, Baptiste and he seemed one and the same person, and she inquired of her husband what had

become of the woman who was with him in the waggon.

"What woman? What waggon?" inquired he. "You have never seen that man before."

"Why, yes," replied she, "do you not remember when we left the house in the morning he was passing, driving a waggon with a woman in it."

"Certainly not; I saw no one," was the reply "It could not be this Indian, how did you think it was he?"

"Because the man I saw in the morning was exactly the same as this; long black hair, black eyes, brown skin and a broad nose," adding, after a pause and another stare, which took in Baptiste's person as well as his face, "his hands are just the same; I noticed them when he held the reins; they looked so black, just like they do now."

"Was it an Indian woman he was driving in the waggon?" asked Captain Percy.

"I don't know. She had on a black crape veil; do the Indian women here wear black crape veils?"

As Abby in her simplicity made the inquiry of her indignant lord, who bit his lip in anger at the ignorance her question betrayed, her own thoughts went back to the Indian women she had seen in Madras, with white cotton coverings falling from their heads over their persons, inwardly comparing the erect figures of the latter with the bent down form she had seen in the morning.

Captain Percy drew his wife from the position they occupied near the Indian pilot, where his friend of the billiard saloon was enjoying himself, laughing over Mrs. Percy's original ideas on Indian costume; he had his own motives for questioning her more fully on the Indian she had seen in the morning, and preferred doing so without the presence of a third person.

"No, of course they dont wear black crape veils; they wear blankets over their heads, in much the same way as the Ayahs you have seen in India wear the white. What direction did the waggon take, you saw passing in the morning? Did it go from West to East, or from East to West?"

"It went the same way as we did; it passed the door just as I came out of the little garden gate; you had gone a good way down the street, so that I had to hurry after you, or I would have taken a better look at them."

"Did you observe of what color the horse was?"

"Yes, it was a kind of whiteish grey, almost white?"

"Were you able to see the woman's face at all? Was it pale?"

"I could not see it at all, that was why I thought she was an Indian."

"Did she look little, or tall like you? What kind of clothes had she?"

"Oh! she was not so tall as me, I dont think; I

could not see her clothes, she was covered up by one of those dirty-looking fur things we see with the *habitants* at market, they call them buffalo robes."

He asked no more questions; he was provoked with himself for having felt any interest on the subject; it could not have been the only Indian in whom or whose motions he had any concern; instead of coming to Montreal, he was most likely making arrangements for Tiny's burial, and he inwardly hoped he would bury her in the same primitive manner as he had done the child; Mamondagokwa's horse was dark-brown, not grey or white, and he inwardly said, "I wish I was gone from this detestable place, where I start at every shadow that crosses my path; I hope ere another week is over, I will have my money from England, and the day it reaches my hand, I shall be gone."

After having breakfasted on their return, Abby went to give an account of the pleasant trip she had had to her American friend, while Captain Percy betook himself to town on *business*, that is to say, he went to pass the time between breakfast and dinner with his friend of the billiard saloon, and having enjoyed himself, and lost five dollars to his friend, who at this early time of the day had no one else to pluck, he went to the livery stable to engage a horse and buggy for an early hour on the morrow, to carry him on his last visit to Isle Jesus, being determined to finish this *annoyance* before the arrival of the British mail, which was to enable him to leave Canada.

During the afternoon, Abby begged of him to

accompany her in a shopping expedition, to choose a bonnet, to which, as he desired to keep her in good humor, he at once agreed.

On entering the milliner's shop they were shewn into an inner room, where a lady in mourning, evidently with a like purpose as their own, stood in front of a large pier glass, fitting on a bonnet, which a milliner girl was assuring her, made her look "quite charming and so young."

Captain Percy's and Abby's attention was at once attracted towards the person they heard addressed thus, and involuntarily they both looked at once at the face reflected in the mirror; at that moment the lady took off the bonnet, and handed it to the girl by her side; standing thus for a second or two with her head and face quite exposed, Captain Percy's earnest look, as he examined her reflected face, was immediately observed by the looker in the glass. He knew her now; there was no mistaking that face, that look; it was the same young woman he had seen looking at him upwards of a year past from the Cabinet room in Leith! That she recognized him was as plainly visible in her face, as if she had turned round and called him by his name; he stood as if transfixed to the spot, his eyes resting on her face, and plainly expressing part of what his heart felt—a vague fear of detection, through this woman, of the crimes he one hour since hoped were hid from man forever. And stranger still, in Abby's face, (who had now taken up a position in front of the glass beside

the stranger), was expressed a recognition of the other, commingled with some strong emotion of no agreeable kind.

Without removing her hat, his wife came towards Captain Percy, saying

"There are none of the bonnets here that please me; shall we go?" Her face flushed, and an uneasy look there, surprised, as much as the face seen in the glass, troubled him.

It by no means suited his purpose to leave the shop until the lady whose face he had now satisfied himself he knew, also went; he determined that he would follow her footsteps, and if possible find out what brought her to Canada; that his wife knew something of her there could be little doubt from what he had just witnessed, but he could postpone his inquiries in that quarter to a more convenient season, and telling her in a low voice that he wanted to remain yet a few minutes in the shop, he in a louder key desired her to choose some flowers for evening wear, saying.

"I am sick of all those you have; I have looked at them so often"

His words seemed to reassure Abby, and she was soon deep in the mysteries of comparing and mixing pink roses with jasmine, and deep purple violets with both, while her husband, by way of improving his time, kept up a little running conversation with the young woman who was serving her.

"Who is that lady in black, who is trying on a

bonnet in the room inside the shop?" was his first essay.

"I do not know, I'm sure."

"She seems a stranger here"

"Perhaps she is ; I dont know."

"Do you think Mrs. Dempster knows her?"

"I really dont know."

"Will you go and ask her if she knows the lady's name, and whether she has her address? my reason for inquiring is that I think she is the widow of a friend of mine."

The girl was gone for a moment, and returned, saying that her mistress had never seen the lady before, but if she left her address the gentleman could have it. Just as she delivered her message, the lady in question passed through the shop on her way out, and Captain Percy, whispering to his wife that he had an engagement, took his leave at once, turning in the direction which Miss St. Clare (whom the reader must already have recognized) had taken.

Miss St. Clare turned towards Bleury street, and there entered a chemist's shop, Captain Percy waiting patiently outside ; in a few minutes the street cars from Craig street came in view ; a young man issued from the chemist's shop, and hailing the cars, stood at the shop door until he had bowed her out.

Captain Percy would fain have asked the same questions here, he had put in the millinery shop in Notre Dame street, but by doing so, he would have missed

the chance of finding out where the young lady lived, which he might do by following her ; he preferred the latter plan, and taking his seat on the same side of the car as she had already seated herself, he endeavoured, by looking steadily through the open door of the car, to disabuse her mind of an idea of being followed, should she have taken notice of his entering after her.

They rode until the cars turned from Bleury into St. Catherine street, where, in the vicinity of the English Cathedral, Miss St. Clare got out, followed by Captain Percy ; she walked leisurely until meeting a gentleman dressed as a clergyman, she shook hands with him, stood and conversed for several minutes, a most awkward thing for the one who was dodging her steps ; the gentleman turned in the direction in which she was walking, and they both walked on until coming to a handsome row of large stone houses, they ascended the steps of one in the row. the lady entering, and the gentleman bidding her goodbye, saying as he did so, loud enough to be heard by Captain Percy—

“ I will call to bring you home early in the evening.”

Captain Percy walked a little way up the street, until he found that the gentleman who had escorted Miss St. Clare was out of sight, and then ascending the steps of the house into which she entered, rang the door-bell, and inquired of a smart-looking Irish

girl who answered his summons, "If Mr. Jones lived here?"

"No," replied she, "he lives in number five."

This would have been a poser for most people, not so for Captain Percy, his cunning wit giving a sharpness that men of more sense and understanding do not possess.

"Does he not live here?" replied he, as if in surprise at the answer given him. "I imagined I saw Miss Jones enter this house as I turned the corner; I surely could not have been mistaken, she seemed to me to wear the same black dress she wore yesterday and the same fringed parasol."

"She is not here," replied the girl, with a compression of the lips which Captain Percy did not think augured well for his receiving the information he wanted, yet he determined to venture on another and more direct mode of questioning, and taking out his pocket book, he opened it, as if to show he would pay for the trouble he was giving, he said with a suave politeness, as if he was addressing a countess—

"Will you have the goodness to tell me the name of the young lady who entered just before I rang; she was accompanied by a clergyman."

"Oh! that's what you're at, is it?" replied the girl, her face lighting up with anger as she spoke; "no, I won't tell you the young lady's name, you impudent blackguard, and you can tell them that sent you, if you come again to this door, I'll set the house dog after you;" she then slammed the

door in his face, leaving him rather crest-fallen outside.

He would have remained in the vicinity until Miss St. Clare's return, which he knew from what her companion said, would be early in the evening, but a slight drizzling rain which had commenced while they were in the cars, was now bidding fair to be a heavy storm, and one from the appearance of the sky, likely to continue for some hours; there was no shop nor other available place of shelter nearer than the next street, and that would take him entirely out of sight of the house she was now in; his remaining here was out of the question, but before betaking himself to his home, he would call at the chemist's in Bleury street; perhaps he would have better luck there. But no, after taking the trouble to walk in the rain nearly half a mile out of the way of his boarding house, he was told they knew nothing whatever of the lady in black, whom one of the young men remembered distinctly having hailed the cars for, and at same time having remarked Captain Percy to enter just after her; The master of the shop was not present, and the three young gentlemen who were, each facetiously suggested a mode of his own by which the mystery of the name of the young lady in black could be solved; one declaring, were he in the gentleman's (Captain Percy's) place, he should certainly have a man, without a moment's delay, to go through the principal streets with a bell, which he would particularly desire should be kept

ringing, so as to attract the ladies to the windows, offering a handsome reward to any one who would give the least clue to the name of the lady in the black gown.

Captain Percy, casting an indignant glance on the impertinent speaker, approached the door, but his probable desire of egress had been foreseen and forestalled by the wit of the shop, a tall young gentleman, standing six feet in his stocking soles, who having turned the key in the lock, placed it on a shelf in the vicinity of the door, so high that said six feet had to stand on tiptoe in order to reach it; having accomplished his purpose, six feet, with a wink to his friends behind the counter, placed his arms akimbo, his spread out hands resting on his hips, and leaning a little forward, so as to make his face come into a closer proximity with Captain Percy's, and entirely ignoring the reiterated request of that gentleman to be allowed to depart, said, with a theatrically grave air—

“ My dear Sir, let me assure you, all the sympathies of my nature are aroused in your behalf; heed not the simple boy who has just advised you to resort to a man and bell to find your beloved; no, let us fly to Prince's, and entreat of him to give us his band, at least his trumpet, drum and cornet, to accompany you, in your search through the rain, for the lady in black; you will then perambulate during the whole hours of darkness the principal streets, wildly calling on the lady in black to put an end to your misery, by declaring her name.”

During this scene, Captain Percy made various attempts to make himself heard, by first one and then another of the clerks, declaring that he would return on the morrow, and make their conduct known to their employer.

This threat was received by a shout of laughter from the three clerks, and an earnest request from six feet, that he would not fail to bring the lady in black with him.

At this juncture it is possible that the lads were in some way aware that their master was not far from their vicinity, as six feet, hurriedly taking the key from its elevated position, opened the door, almost thrusting Captain Percy out, in his hurry to get rid of his visitor, while the others seemed, as if by magic, to be busy, quiet and grave, as their employer entered by a back door, which communicated with the house above.

The short, fair, pompous looking man, and the name of the lady in black, formed a fund of amusement for some days to the young gentlemen in Mr. Leith's shop, that is, in the moments of leisure, when the Boss, as they called their master, was absent; six feet, in particular, who was allowed, even by the other clerks, to be a lady killer, would, at least a dozen times a day, throw himself into a theatrical attitude, and beseech the others to "indulge to him the name of the lady in black," which witticism, of course, as in duty bound, the others received with shouts of uproarious laughter.

Captain Percy's reflections, as he took his lonely way towards Isle Jesus in the grey light of the early morning, were not of the most pleasant kind; he went a day earlier than he had told Tiny he would, and he did so, because he had, from behind the cedar tree, seen the fatal bottle (the contents of which were to hurry her from time to eternity) in her hands; he had also listened to those sad words, "It is an easy way out of all my trouble;" words, which would have filled a stranger with horror, were to his guilty soul as balm in Gilead, assuring him that very soon his crime of immuring the wife of his youth in a living grave, among half savages, would be hid forever in the grave where her poisoned body lay, and with her death, his second crime of bigamy would be no more; but even with this death, which he had so long wished for, compassed—and he had no doubt whatever that she lay stiff and stark somewhere, there were other things that stirred up anxieties he could not allay; he had already used up nearly half of the money promised to the Indian in the event of Tiny's death; he knew the covetous and avaricious nature of the people he would have to deal with, yet what was he to do? the British Mail day had come, and brought neither money nor letter; ere this the Indian had doubtless gone to the Curé, and found that the promised money was no longer in his hands; he could not risk leaving him any longer without at least a part of it.

Again, there was that face so strangely seen,

reflected in the milliner's shop yesterday, as he had seen it over a year ago in a drawing-room in distant Europe ; The expression of dislike, mingled with a certain innate fear, which passed over the girl's face, as she recognized him in the mirror, joined to the furtive look of annoyance her face again wore, as she passed him in leaving the cars, could be explained in no other way than that he or his affairs were connected with her presence in Montreal, and that she wished to avoid his notice ; he had not yet questioned Abby as to her knowledge of the stranger, but he would do so on his return, when his mind would be more at ease, when he knew *the body* was buried, and the Indian pacified by the fifty dollars he had brought to give him, and the promise of the rest being brought soon ; How Abby had come to know this stranger was to him inexplicable ; she, with his knowledge, having no opportunity of making the acquaintance of any one except those who lived in the boarding-houses they from time to time had been inmates of ; more extraordinary still seemed the disagreeable feeling of half-dread, which the sudden appearance of this young woman evidently excited in her mind, prompting her to leave the place, without ever trying to find the bonnet they had come to purchase.

Such was the current of his thoughts as he rode along ; he passed the *auberge* without slackening his speed, and as he came in sight of the priest's house, spurred his horse into a quicker pace, in case he

might be hailed by the Curé, and obliged to listen to a long story of the Indian's rage, when he found the money was gone; he would know all from the Indian himself in a couple of hours more, and he would not be bored now by hearing it from a third person, and of all others from a garrulous old village priest.

He drove on to the shelter of the ruined cottage, where he tied his horse and buggy, leaving the horse loose enough to enjoy a breakfast on the rich purple clover which grew in profusion by the old wall, and thus prevented him from being restive until his return from the hunt.

As he neared the place which he believed to have been the scene of his wife's suicide, even his hardness of heart and levity of feeling experienced a hush; he determined, instead of going round by the usual way in entering the cottage, to pass by the double cedar, and thus be able to see by the window, before entering, whether the body still lay there, which he earnestly hoped was not the case; the hour was early, few of the French peasants, a proverbially early people, being yet abroad; the morning was gray and dull, with a slight chill in the atmosphere, which was more felt, by the heavy dew of the previous night still lying thick on the long grass.

Approaching the window, he found it shut, and on trying to open it, could not succeed without making more noise than he cared to do; all he could learn by putting his face close to the coarse small panes of glass was, that if the bed was still there, the

quilt, with its little squares of brown and yellow calico, could not be seen.

He lingered for some minutes by the window, as if he would put off as long as possible, the turbulent scene with the Indian and his squaw, he was sure would ensue on his entrance; at last provoked with his own pusillanimity he mentally exclaimed "What are the old savages to me? Tiny is dead and buried; that is one thing sure, or she would be in this room; they will be glad enough, or they ought to be, to come to my terms," and approaching the low door of the hut, he mechanically laid his hand on the latch to admit himself.

The latch moved as usual, but the door did not open; he shook it but without effect, and fancying the old people must be asleep, he knocked so loudly that the hollow echoes resounded from the cottage.

"Mamondagokwa! Mamondagokwa!" he called out over and over again in loud accents, but no answer, except the former hollow echo, came to his call; he now betook himself a second time to the window of his wife's room, and after a little exertion, succeeded in driving it in; the room was empty, nothing to be seen but the brown rafters and dark walls; a cat jumped up on the window sill, and sprang past him into the open air; he put his head into the room, peering in all directions, but nothing was to be seen; the cat who had just made her escape, seemed to be the only living thing in or about the place; all sorts of wild ideas came trooping into his mind; perhaps

his wife's body was in the other apartment, and that the Indians finding the money was no longer in the Curé's possession, had gone to Montreal to get the Protestant priest to bury it, was his first thought; but then he argued, why denude the room of the furniture? Again, being devoid of means to buy a coffin or pay the other burial expenses, perhaps they had shut up the body in their own apartment, and gone off from the place altogether; their habits were so erratic they probably might have left the hut thus, intending never to return.

This view of the case was at first hailed as one which would free him at once from all further trouble, but a moment's consideration sufficed to show him that sooner or later a dead body so left must be found by some one, and then the English made an unwarrantable fuss about such things, there would be such rigid investigations as might ultimately lead, notwithstanding all the precautions he had taken, to a discovery of the share he had in the matter; the face seen the day before, mixing itself up largely in the fear he entertained of one day being called on by his brother-men to say what had become of the woman he had left in the Indian hut.

Reasoning thus, he determined to break the door of the hut, and so learn at once whether or not there was aught there likely to bring mischief to him in the future; this was no difficult matter, a few well aimed blows sent it off its leather hinges into the hut; here all was as in the other division, bare walls,

black rafters, with the addition of a heap of ashes and a few half burnt logs where the fire had been; he turned over these with a strange curiosity; they were still ignited, telling him that the hut had not been many hours vacant.

"Probably," soliloquized he, "the Indians have gone with the grey dawn by the light of which I left Montreal; how innately stupid of me not to have come yesterday; from what I saw I might have been sure she would have been dead in half an hour; if instead of trifling away my time in jaunting to Lachine, I had come out here to attend to what concerned me, all this affair would have been settled, my mind at ease, and my body at liberty to go when and where I pleased; the ill-luck which has followed me all my life is at work now; my evil spirit is always too alert, or too inert; I am in a desperate hurry when I should rest on my oars and let things take their course, but when I should set spurs to my steed and ride for my life, I lie in the sun and smoke my cigar."

He turned and left the cottage, and almost at his feet he beheld what with his preconceived certainty of her death, he at once concluded to be Tiny's grave.

A patch of the ground just in front of the door and beyond the cedar tree had evidently been turned up within the last hour or two; it was about six or seven feet long, and proportionally broad, just such a pit as an Indian would be supposed to make that

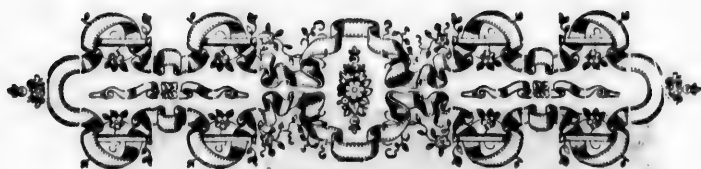
he might bury his dead ; it was loosely and carelessly done ; the pieces of turf, instead of being laid in order on the grass after the body was placed there, and the rest of the mould was put in, were thrown, some of them side-ways, some upside down, with their roots turned upwards, not the least effort having been made to conceal the fact that a grave was there : Had he been less eager to effect an entrance into the cottage he must have seen this mound half an hour before, and with his natural levity, notwithstanding that he conceived himself almost standing upon and looking at the new-made grave of one whom in life he had cruelly injured, he laughed at the trouble he had taken to gain an entrance into Mamondagokwa's hut, and to make himself heard by that gentleman, whom he now hoped had either gone to the hunting ground, as he knew he was in the habit of doing every Autumn, or else on some expedition to sell his baskets.

He felt satisfied that in any case the old Indian and his squaw were both gone on some journey, and his fifty dollars safe in his pocket ; they in their wisdom having concluded to take this easy and quickly effected mode of interment, and not having heard of the withdrawal of the money from the Curé's hands, had imagined it would be safe in his keeping until their return.

He took hold of a bunch of roots forming one of the sods upon the heap of earth, and raised it from its place without an effort, and uttering an oath he cursed the stupidity of the fool who could have left the grave in such an unprotected state as this ; a wind

such as had occurred two days previously, if it centred its rage here, would quickly send every sod and particle now covering it, trooping abroad through the bush, leaving exposed a suspicious looking deal box, or perhaps worse still a white ghastly face. This must not remain so, and divesting himself of his coat, he broke off several branches from a neighboring fir tree, which having laid across the grave, he stamped into the fresh mound, and this completed, covered the whole with larger boughs; even with his best efforts it was not so secure as he could wish it to be, yet guilt made him the coward it makes of all, and he did not dare to put in execution his first impulse of going to the *habitant* Joinnette's farm house to borrow a spade.

As he finished his work, something glittering in the sun (which was now high in the heavens) attracted his attention, close to the wall of the hut, and going towards it, he lifted up the blue bottle, the silver top lying back on its hinge, the stopper gone; He held it up between his eye and the bright sky, not a drop of the deadly liquid it once contained was left! Another with a heart less hard would have buried it out of his sight in the soft earth at his feet; not so Bertram Percy, he carefully wiped off with his pocket handkerchief the dew with which the bottle lying among the deep mossy grass under the window was still wet, and having done so, placed it in his vest pocket, saying "Lie there, my friend, you shall have a safer resting place when we pass the Lachapelle Bridge."



CHAPTER XVI.

MRS. Dunbar's house was getting quite full of boarders, and although I, for my own part, would have liked better to be among fewer people, yet I felt glad when she informed me (which she never failed to do with a look of pleasure lighting up her care-lined face,) that another had been added to her household.

Mr. Denham had brought two of his own friends, two brothers who were lawyers, who talked politics at breakfast and dinner, and so let us know what the world was doing; they in turn brought a friend of their own, a Mr. Clement, who was book-keeper to a chemist, and whose income being a good one, and moreover his father a wealthy farmer, paid a liberal board; he was a great tall man, his head towering above every one else in the house; he was moreover a funny fellow, and kept us in amusement; he soon became a favorite with all, particularly with Miss Dunbar, whose toilet was now plentifully supplied with essences, flowers, etcetera.

We had a little *parterre* in front of the house, and by Mr. Clement's care, this was becoming quite bright, a new pot of geranium, stock, gilly-flower or

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THE CONVENT OF THE HOLY CROSS

other bright flower being added every day or two ; Mr. Clement shewed the way, and the two lawyers and even Mr. Denham, not to be behindhand, each brought an offering.

My time was now in danger of hanging heavily on my hands, and to prevent this in some degree, I proposed taking charge of the *parterre*, devoting my morning hours before breakfast to watering and weeding the same.

One morning, as I was busy watering my pretty charge, a country waggon passed, driven by an Indian ; this it was that at first attracted my attention, Mr. Denham having offered, only the evening before, to drive me to Caughnawaga, that I might see the Indians there ; as I looked at the Indian, my eyes passed from his dark face to that of the person he was driving at a snail's pace. This was a lady dressed in black, and carefully wrapped round with buffalo robes, her face, (which was so white as almost to seem like an alabaster face on a living body), was much exposed by her bonnet being worn at the back of the head, as bonnets used to be two or three years before, her large soft stone grey eyes and pale brown hair, the graceful turn of the head, all reminded me so forcibly of some familiar face, that I fancy the expression of my own as I looked up to hers, must have told somewhat of the thoughts passing in my mind ; she colored slightly, and as she passed from my sight, busied herself in arranging a thick crape veil over her face ; I felt ashamed of my rudeness

in gazing so intensely at a passing stranger, yet for the whole day my mind would revert to the pale face I had seen in the morning, wondering and trying to bring to recollection where I had seen it before.

Hours after the fair vision had passed from my sight, I remembered that the face of the morning was one exactly resembling the last portrait sent from India of Mrs Percy, taken in a mourning dress and bonnet, sent to her on the death of her aunt! I first asked myself, "Could it be possible that this was indeed Mrs. Percy?" and then my better judgment seemed to tell me that such an idea was most preposterous, in fact an utter impossibility; if she were indeed in life, how would it accord with Captain Percy's safety to allow her to be riding, as the lady of the morning evidently was, at her own free will, in the streets of Montreal, with an Indian? when by applying to any of the clergymen from her own land, several of whom were here, she could be protected until her relatives were informed of her situation, and brought to her aid; Oh! no, the idea was discarded as soon as formed; it was contrary to all sense, all precedent, and I felt pleased that the fancied resemblance to the picture did not strike me in the morning, lest I should have made a fool of myself, by running after and speaking to the stranger.

The evening previous, in walking along one of the cross streets, I fancied that Captain Percy passed me driving a handsome horse and buggy; from the time I saw this man in the cars, I had an instinctive

dread of him, an impression which was deepened as I fancied he passed me by the evening before ; the person, whether Captain Percy or not, seemed to regard me with a look of innate malice, a feeling, which reason against it as I would, filled me with fear, as if this man, by some inscrutable fate, had the reins of my destiny in his hands, and would use his power for my destruction.

Oppressed by such vague terrors which would not leave me, strive as I would against them, it is not much to be wondered at that my dreams followed in the same train of thought ; At one time my mother urging me to leave a land where misery was to be my portion, to go home and take care of Ella ; a line of conduct which she always did impress upon me on the night of the British Mail, when Miss Ella's letter was generally fraught with similar desires.

In another phase of the visions of the night, Lady Gordon seemed as if standing by my bed, calling upon me to "arise and save her child ;" the words "arise, arise," (probably spoken by Mrs. Dunbar, and intended for the ear of her sleepy and tired maid of all work,) being those which broke my unquiet slumbers, making me jump out of bed and consult my watch, which pointed to five o'clock. It was what the French call "grand jour," and a lovely morning, so on the completion of my morning toilet and duties, I sought the parterre, that I might refresh the flowers waiting for their sweet morning

drink of pure water ; All this viewed in connection, it is not wonderful that the pale passing face in the Indian's cart, dressed in the fashion of the last bonnet sent to Mrs. Percy, should also to my fevered imagination, assume her likeness.

I had an invitation to spend the evening at the house of Doctor Balfour, and previous to going there, betook myself to a milliner's shop in Notre Dame street, to purchase a bonnet, Mrs. Balfour having with good natured interest in the appearance of her countrywoman, lectured me on the shabbiness of the one I wore during a previous visit to her hospitable and pleasant home.

While occupied in choosing said bonnet by the aid of a mirror, I was startled by seeing in the glass before me, the face of Captain Percy, and the young woman I had seen with him first in Kay's Hotel, afterwards in the railway cars, the former examining my face with the same sinister look his own wore in passing me by the previous evening.

Completing my purchase as quickly as possible, and wrapping my old hat in a piece of paper, I left the shop, closely followed by Captain Percy, who on my turning into another street dogged my footsteps, and was evidently intent on tracing me to my boarding house ; my heart beat hard with terror as I felt myself followed closely by this vindictive man, who from the fact of his doing so, I felt convinced, must have in some way become acquainted with the motive I had for residing in Montreal, and I had no

doubt, would by every means in his power, lawful or otherwise, frustrate my purpose ; I do not know that I ever heard Lady Gordon talk of him as Captain Percy, her designation of him being invariably " that unscrupulous, bad man," and these words of her's seemed to come, warning me to avoid him by every means in my power, and at the same time, I felt a strong conviction that there must be something of importance to be concealed in his conduct to his dead wife, which prompted him to the course of action he was now pursuing.

I was close to the chemist's shop in Bleury street, where our tall boarder was employed, and entering, I told him I wanted to wait there until the cars passed, so that I might ride a part of my way to Doctor Balfour's.

He at once desired another of the young men to stop the cars as they passed, and in a few minutes, I was handed in, when to my dismay, I saw Captain Percy deliberately walk in after me, and seat himself on the same side, near the door ; at the entrance to the street leading to the one where Doctor Balfour lived, I left the cars, again closely followed by my tormentor, who kept me in sight until I entered the house ; fortunately, at a little distance from my destination, I met Mr. Denham, who promised to come and take me home.

During the course of the evening, I took an opportunity of mentioning to Doctor Balfour, having seen Captain Percy, and repeated to him the way in

which I had been followed, and the dread I had of him, a stranger and unprotected as I was.

Doctor Balfour laughed at my fears, saying, "You forget that here you are as safe as if you were in Scotland; you are under the protection of the law here as well as there; he dare not lift a finger against you; it would be as much as his liberty is worth, why then dread him? This is simply a weak, nervous feeling which seems unnatural to, and is certainly unworthy of you; but his appearance in Montreal, and his evident anxiety to know where you live, and of course find out what you are doing, convinces me more positively than before that Mrs. Percy is yet alive; we must set both our brains to work to ascertain, if possible, some other way than those already tried, by which we may light upon her whereabouts. I wish Mr. Morton were here, or that he would allow you to consult some other lawyer on the subject; this seems to me the most feasible way of solving the mystery of a woman having died in Montreal, not two years ago, of whom no trace can now be found; these men are bred up to the very work in which you and I have failed, simply, I believe, from our not knowing how to go about it."

Although I did not say so, I held a different opinion from Doctor Balfour; I believed firmly that Mrs. Percy was a tenant of the grave, and I believed also it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find out where that hidden unmarked grave lay; her husband's conduct impressing me strongly with the conviction that she was the victim of foul play.

After breakfast on the following morning, Mr. Denham offered to drive me to the Sault Récollet and St. Martin's, to both of which places he was going to make arrangements for preaching on the two next Sundays. I gladly accepted his offer; I had nothing to occupy me in town, and although I had now been several months in Montreal, I had never been further from it than to the kitchen garden farm of Mrs. Campbell's son-in-law, about two miles from the town. I went there several times to see Sandy Mitchell, who had become a very rock in steadiness since taking up his abode in Canada; he was now earning a dollar and a half a day, boarding in Mrs. Campbell's cottage, where he read the Bible his mother gave him at parting, to her and her adopted children, every night and morn. He had already repaid the money his father gave him, and was now saving a sum to send home as a present to his mother; the last time I was there he asked me if I would bring it with me when I went home. "Alas! and woe is me," I mentally exclaimed, "if I faithfully fulfil the spirit and letter of my fatal vow, when shall I go home? Sandy, with his grandson in his hand, will go back to Scotland ere I go."

We had a delightful ride out by the beautiful Sault and its mimic rapids, the very air musical with the many bright plumaged birds which inhabited the richly wooded district we were passing through, the wild canary, so tame that it would sit and sing on the outspreading branches as we passed underneath, the squirrels here seemed to have forgotten

their fear of man, one little fellow sitting on a tree close by the road, the trunk of which we had seen him run up a second or two previous, turned round to look at the strangers as we rode along, his red tail turned up over his back, while in his hand-like paws he held some *bonne bouche* with which he gratified his appetite, while satisfying his curiosity by inspecting us.

Mr Denham concluded his business at the Sault, while I waited patiently in front of the pleasant little hostlery, kept by French people, whose manners, looks and language, would, with a very little aid from the imagination, bring one who had ever been there, back to Brittany, where their fore fathers came from so many long years ago; on entering their houses you see the same perfect cleanliness, the same love of order and decoration, as characterize their brethren across the sea; the same gay looking French prints of St. Joseph, the Blessed Virgin, and St. Francois Xavier, as I had looked on a hundred times on the old cottage walls of Brittany, are here repeated in the Canadian home, where amid its native snows the Frenchman warms himself by the same box-stove as his fore fathers warmed themselves by, sings the same songs, dances the same dance, and discouraged not by the arctic winter and short summer, cultivates the sweet *Fameuse*, with its crimson cheek and snowy flesh, and the purple and white grape of fair France, three thousand miles from their own land, surrounded by an alien people, under a foreign rule, speaking their own language,

keeping their own religion, their own customs and manners, living in the very atmosphere of France !

The Sault Recollet passed, we now pressed on to St. Martin's, but ere we reached the village, while just on its outskirts, our horse took fright at the noise of a horn, together with an outre looking figure placed on a poll, which some French children had made for their amusement, and rushed on with high leaps, which threatened every moment to break the carriage in pieces, in one of which I was thrown out upon a heap of stones collected on the way-side for mending the road ; having thus lightened himself of a part of his load, he sprang off with renewed vigor towards the village, where he was at last caught and quieted down, although not before he had half ruined the carriage.

I think I must have been stunned by the fall, as I have no recollection of anything after being thrown on the heap of stones, until I opened my eyes, feeling my head and neck drenched with water, and seeing a crowd of French children of both sexes surrounding me. I endeavored to raise myself, but the attempt gave me such exquisite pain, that I was fain to resume my recumbent position ; a large Frenchwoman, who I saw by the bowl of water in her hand, was the one I was indebted to for my wetting, asked, making an effort to speak English, if I was much hurt ?

I replied in French that I did not think so, but that I fancied something about my arm or shoulder was injured, and if there was a doctor near, I should wish him to be sent for.

"I have already sent for a doctor," replied the young woman. "My husband went to bring him here, immediately after carrying you in. I am glad you can speak French, continued she, "as my husband and I only speak a few words of English, and I fear the doctor neither speaks nor understands a word."

On looking around, I found that I was lying on a wooden settle in a large room, the furniture of which consisted besides of only a table, cupboard, and a dozen of chairs, and judging from the number of children around me, the chairs would all be required; there must have been at least ten, between the ages of sixteen and one year, an old grandmother too, whom I afterwards learned was nearly one hundred years old, wandered out and in between the room where I was lying and the kitchen, into which I could look from the settle where I lay.

Although I experienced a considerable deal of pain, yet surrounded as I was by so many objects to attract my attention from myself, the time did not seem long until the doctor came, notwithstanding that Monsieur Joinnette the farmer, in whose house I was, had after going to the village, been obliged to drive two miles further off in search of him.

The doctor was accompanied by Mr. Denham, whom I was thankful to see uninjured in head or limb, although he must have sustained some severe bruises. On examination, my arm, which was the part causing me most pain, was found to be slightly sprained near

the shoulder, the doctor saying that I must remain where I was for a few days, and then I could return to Montreal, without fear; I was quite willing to do this; I had no business to require my presence in Montreal, and I felt very sure that I would give less trouble to Madame Joinnette, with her number of little girls, four of whom were able to help their mother, than I should do in Mrs. Dunbar's house, with her one servant and many boarders.

Madame, aided by her two eldest girls, soon arranged a hard mattress for me in the adjoining room, where my arm being set, I was enjoined to keep quiet for at least two days; this would, under ordinary circumstances, have been hard work, as all available books in the house consisted of school-books, and a few prizes received by one of the girls at a nun's school, but Madame Joinnette was a host in herself, a true Frenchwoman, making the most of every little incident, telling amusing anecdotes of their own family and neighbors, the sayings and doings of even the little children forming something worth listening to, delivered in her piquant way.

Mr. Denham concerned himself more than was at all necessary about the accident which I had met with, and although he did not say so, I could easily see he blamed himself and his bad driving for what might have happened in the hands of the most skilful Jehu; he did not leave Monsieur Joinnette's house until late in the evening, a circumstance I regretted, on account of the price which I knew he

would have to pay for the horse and carriage, knowing as I did, that his means were limited ; and what grieved me still more was, that during the first three days of my residence, he drove out every evening to see me.

The farm Joinnette owned, was bought in the first place partly with money he had earned by his work previous to his marriage, and afterwards he had contrived to pay off every year a portion of the debt due upon it, notwithstanding the large family he had to bring up, and various losses he had sustained by the death of horses and cattle.

The orchards, of which there were three, all filled with fine young thriving trees, had been planted by his own hand ; one of them indeed, the nearest to the house, was as far as possible of his own creation, the trees having been reared from seeds sown by himself ; poor man, he never tired speaking of his orchards, he had an anecdote for almost each separate tree. A few days before our accident, a runaway horse jumped over the fence of one of his orchards, breaking one or two branches of a plum tree which was in bearing for the first time. Alas ! what a number of sighs and laments the loss of those precious branches caused.

Another source of pride to Monsieur was his young colts, two of which were really beautiful young creatures ; he expected to realize large sums by the sale of these when they were broke, and his castle-building in the air on their account was a favorite evening recreation.

This simple habitant was one of the best of husbands and fathers, and although a poor man, hospitable to a fault, if an excess of such a virtue can be called a fault.

Madame, who was ten years younger than her husband, was a beautiful woman, being large and fat it is true, but among the French *habitants* no woman who is not so, can have any claims to beauty, and apart from her title to be called beautiful on that score, Madame's finely cut features, clear brown skin, bright color, and soft brown eyes, would have warranted her a beauty in more fastidious circles than amid those she moved; she, as I found most of the French Canadian women do, ruled *all* in the house, and nearly all about the farm; nothing was done, from the most trivial to the most important thing, without consulting Madame; when a horse was wanted by a neighbor either in loan or to hire, Joinnette would generally reply, "I dont know, what do you say, Rose? Monsieur Faucher wants to hire" or, as the case might be "to get the loan of the horse, do you think we can give it to him?"

The reply was generally in the affirmative; these good simple people living very much on the principle of doing unto others as they would be done by.

Instead of a few days, as the doctor supposed I would be obliged to remain with the Joinnettes, it was several weeks ere I could again bear the fatigue of going to Montreal; inflammation set in around the injured part of my shoulder, and poor Madame

Joinnette had a weary time bathing it with warm fomentations. I shall ever remember the kind patience with which I was attended to in their happy humble home, and the interest evinced by all, children, father, grandmother, in my recovery, and that I should be carefully tended, and every want if possible supplied. One little girl they had christened Victoria, for our English Queen, although they, nor indeed any of the French *habitants* I met with, did not consider themselves subjects of the Queen; when I ventured to say that all in Canada were subjects of the Queen of England, I was listened to with a quiet smile, and the reply given was generally "Yes, the Queen is certainly Queen of Canada and of the English people here, but we are not subjects of the Queen of England,—the Emperor is our King." No explanation which could be given, would have the slightest effect; they would agree with you in all you said, and after you had exhausted all your rhetoric, and come to the conclusion that by the knowledge you had imparted to them of mere facts, they must be convinced, they would meet you with the old story—"Oh! yes, the Emperor must always be king of the French, wherever they are; in France or here, it is all the same."

In telling of the respect felt by the *habitants* for *l'Empereur*, I had almost forgotten my anecdote of our Queen's little name-child Victoria; she would come many times every day with a fresh glass of water, saying in her childish way, "Would Madame *ouelle* like a nice drink of water?"

In like manner, one of the boys, fair-haired and blue eyed, as unlike a French boy in exterior as possible, but fortunately for himself the very counterpart of his good father in all the qualities of the mind and heart, Alexander Noel, would set off in the early morning, and return long before breakfast with such wild fruit, raspberries or blackberries, as he could find in the bush, and presenting them to me, would say with a naive politeness so natural to a French boy, "they are fresh and cool, Mademoiselle, picked while the dew was yet upon them." Such were the delicate attentions I was constantly receiving from those polite peasant children, prompted by the same kindly feeling which induced their father and mother to provide for my wants, and tend me with the most sedulous care.

I was getting much better; the inflammation was quite gone from my arm, and I could move it a little, but I was becoming anxious to return to Montreal, where I hoped to receive by the first British mail, a letter from Mr. Morton, telling me what I was next to do, and I felt sick at heart, as I thought this letter might give me instructions to go to Quebec or some other Canadian city, and there repeat the round of useless inquiries and weary walks I had already gone through in Montreal.

I concurred heartily in the wish expressed by Doctor Balfour, that Mr. Morton would either come out himself or allow me to employ some clever lawyer here, whose acute brain would probably at

once hit upon some plan for the discovery of Mrs. Percy's grave, which would never occur to such an untutored mind as mine, or for that matter, Doctor Balfour's either.

The doctor called to see my arm ; he had not been to the farm for some days, and was now so pleased with the amendment in its appearance and feeling, that he gave me leave to return to Montreal, should the symptoms continue as they were.

That evening, Madame Joinnette sat up for several hours after the children went to bed, in order to await the return of her husband, who had gone into Montreal late in the afternoon, and consequently would not return until midnight ; knowing this I begged of her to bring her work into the room I occupied, and sit by me ; in the lazy lying-about life I was leading, sleep seemed to fly my pillow, and Madame, with her fund of village anecdotes, would help me to pass the sleepless hours pleasantly.

Almost immediately as she sat down, with her constant accompaniment of an old garment to mend in her hands, she said—

“ I have something to tell you about a very wicked countryman of yours, which I do not like to speak of before the children, although they know it very well, but such things do not put good thoughts in children's heads ; it was not easy to tell it to you when Joinnette was at home, as he debarred me from doing so, he said it would only grieve you, and perhaps affront you also, to hear of this wicked

Englishman ; but all day a feeling in my heart has been almost speaking to me to tell you ; perhaps the blessed Virgin has put it in my heart, so that you may help this poor lady out of the hands of her wicked brother."

My curiosity was aroused, and I begged of her to tell me, saying that if it were in my power to help the lady she spoke of, I would certainly consider it my duty to do so.

"Do you know a gentleman of the name of Smith in Montreal?" she began.

I replied in the negative, telling her that Smith was a name equally common among the English as Benoit or Labelle among the French, and although I did not know them, there were probably hundreds of the name among the English in Montreal.

"Well," said she, "long ago, more than a year and a half, perhaps two years since, a gentleman of the name of Smith, came out to an Indian and his squaw who live away down in the bush far from every other house ; we are the nearest neighbors, and I am sure it is six or seven miles from this, and the bush is so thick that we could not take a horse, so we never went there until about six months ago, but I will tell you about that again. The Indian had known the man Smith ten years ago, when he came with two other Englishmen out to a camp of Indians, who were hunting near the Rocky Mountains, and when he saw the gentleman on the streets of Montreal he knew him again, because the Indians never

forget a face they have once seen. The man Smith speaks good French, and the Indian went up to him and asked if he knew him? The man did not at first remember, but when the Indian put him in mind of the camp at the Rocky Mountains, he was very glad to see him, and took him into an *auberge* and gave him his dinner; when the Indian was eating his dinner, Smith told him he had a sick sister, who he was very anxious to get some one in the country to take care of, and asked him if his squaw would not do this, offering to give good pay. The Indian told him that his place was only a poor one, but if the gentleman thought it good enough, he would take care of his sister until he came back from Europe. The man Smith bade him finish his dinner and wait for him, and before the Indian had finished his dinner, (you know the Indians eat seldom, but they eat an awful quantity at once), and before he had done eating, the man Smith came back with a carriage, and they drove out to the Indian's place to see it, as the man said, but I'm sure it was only that he might know the way; he did not stop to go in, but just turned round the horse and drove back to Montreal, telling the Indian he would bring his sister that night; and so he did; the old Indian came up here for fresh straw to fill a bed and the lend of a quilt, but I'm sure it was a poor bed they made for a lady like her; when she came they found that one of her sides was paralyzed, and she could only use one leg and one arm; Smith did not tell them this for fear they would not take her, and we

are sure he brought her to them to have her out of the way, that the other English people might not know any thing about her.

She had a little child about six months old when she came to the Indian's house, but it died, and it was when it died that I saw her. The old squaw sent her husband up for me that night; she thought I could speak English enough to comfort the mother, but you know my English is good for very little."

"But," asked I, "how could they bring her into such a close bush as that if she is paralyzed?"

"There is an entrance into the bush on the other side, through which the Indian takes his cart; they make baskets and sell them for a living; they are both very old; grandmother says she thinks the old man is nearly as old as she is!"

"Well," said I, "do tell me about the young English woman, is she still living with the Indians?"

"No," replied Madame, "she was taken into Montreal the very day before you came; but before I tell you about that, I must tell you something about Smith, her wicked brother; he came here over a year since, and wished us to take her to board; we had just lost our horse, and Joinnette, who is good-natured and ready to trust every one, thinking all others as good as himself, told Smith that we had lost our horse, and we had a payment of one hundred dollars to make on our farm within ten days; we did not know what to do, we thought surely we must lose the farm, when Smith came and offered us

to send his sister to board here, telling us that she was so ill she could only live a few weeks at most, and when she died we would have one hundred dollars to pay for our trouble in attending her, and if she was dead and buried in seven days, which she would be if we neglected her, he would make the money one hundred and fifty dollars, and he would give us ten dollars in hand for her first month's board, which would be ours if she only lived two days after she came."

"Why," exclaimed I, horror struck, "He wanted you to kill her."

"Aye," replied the Frenchwoman. "That was just what he did want, but thanks be to the blessed Virgin, he came to the wrong people, if he could have given us all France instead of a hundred and fifty dollars, we would not have been his sister's murderers."

"Where do you say she is now?" inquired I, feeling an intense interest in the poor young woman.

"I do not know," replied Madame Joinnette. "All we know is that the Indians took her into Montreal at her own request some weeks since, just the very day before you came here."

I thought of the Indian driving the white woman I had seen on the morning of the day previous to my coming to St. Martin's, and the likeness the woman's face bore to Mrs. Percy's picture, and I asked with a quickened beating of the heart.

"How did the Indian take her to Montreal, and at what hour in the day do you think they went?"

"They took her in in Joinnette's waggon, and they had his horse also; their own horse was too tired; they had been drawing their winter wood the day before, and when the Indian told for what he wanted the horse, Joinnette gave him our waggon and buffaloes, as she would ride easier in it than in the Indian's cart; she must have been in Montreal in good time, because they brought back our horse and waggon before ten o'clock in the forenoon."

"Do you know what kind of bonnet the lady wore?" I asked.

"No, I never saw her but once, the night her baby died, but I am sure she had not much of anything to wear; all the clothes she had were in a little leather valise Smith brought when he brought herself, and she never had anything new all the time she was with the Indians, and it is, I am sure, two years since she came to them first.

"I suppose," said I, "the Indian could tell us what became of the lady; I hope he did not bring her to her brother."

"No, I am sure he did not do that," replied Madame, "because he told us that a young granddaughter of theirs who lived with the English a long time, and speaks English as well as you do, came home with them the night he came for the waggon, and the lady made her ask him to take her into Montreal; I think she wanted to go to an

hospital, but if you wish to know we will send Noel to ask Monsieur le Curé to-morrow. I am sure he knows where she is; she would not be taken into an hospital without a letter from Monsieur Le Curé."

"If she is in an hospital," said I, "she will be most likely in the English hospital."

"I do not know," replied Madame, folding up her work, as she heard the noise made by the waggon bringing Joinnette home, as it passed the window, "but Noel will go to-morrow to Monsieur le Curé; we will hear all about it then."

Madame Joinnette's narrative had given me food for thought; during several hours I lay thinking over what I had heard, and in connection with this, the likeness of the white woman I had seen in the Indian's waggon to Mrs. Percy, the fact of Captain Percy being still in Montreal, and his evident desire to know what I was about there. I tried to sleep but it was impossible; the idea that at last I had a clue—not to Mrs. Percy's grave, but to the living, breathing, if frail and sickly woman, banished sleep so entirely, that when the day-light at last came peeping in through the green blinds of the room, I rose as refreshed as if I had passed the night in undisturbed repose.

I surprised the farmer by going to him as soon as I heard his footsteps in the kitchen ere the clock had warned five, asking him other particulars of the story I had heard the previous evening, and in getting

him to give me what I had forgotten to ask his wife, a minute description of Smith.

He at once complied, giving me an exact picture of Captain Percy, drawn with all the graphic powers of a Frenchman; in so doing, bringing to my recollection a peculiarly large and showy ring which that delectable gentleman wore upon his little finger, the habit he had of enclosing his lower lip with his teeth, not escaping Joinnette's observation.

I expressed a great desire to see the Indian, saying, "I am going back to Montreal to-day, I wish I could see the Indian before I leave this."

"The Indian and his wife have both gone to the chase, and will not return here before the end of next winter, perhaps not until spring; he left all his furniture stored in my sister's barn."

"Then could I learn from the priest where to find the English lady?" I inquired. "Madame told me the Curé had given a letter to have her admitted into an hospital in Montreal."

"I am sure the priest will tell us," replied the farmer, "but are you really going to leave us to-day? we have grown so accustomed to have you in the house, we will miss you all the time; I hope you will come and see us before you go back to England."

This I readily promised, urging him to send at once to the priest for the information I desired, as I wanted to leave for my journey as soon as possible.

"If that is the case," said the farmer, "You shall

have breakfast at once; I will drive you into Montreal myself, and we will call at the priest's house, and you can see him yourself in passing."

The arrangements were soon made; my adieux said to these kind people, and with many promises to return soon and see them again, I got into the waggon which was to convey me to Montreal, full of hope that my mission to Canada was to be brought to a speedy and happy end.

When I was seated in the waggon, I at once recognized the grey horse before me, as the one I had seen the Indian driving a few weeks previous; would that I had heeded better the warning voice that called me to awake on the morning I first saw it!

Arrived at the priest's house, Joinette went in and explained my reason for troubling him; he at once came out and with great politeness offered not only to give me the name of the hospital to which he had sent Miss Smith, (as he called her), but also a letter to the Superior, requesting her to allow me visit the invalid whom he had three weeks before recommended to the mercy of the sisters of The Holy Cross.

This letter I accepted with many thanks for the kind thoughtfulness of the Reverend gentleman in giving it; until it was offered it never occurred to me what was most likely to take place, viz.—that I could not obtain admittance to the hospital of a cloistered convent.

In possession of this precious missive, we left Isle

Jesus ere the lazier inhabitants of Montreal were at breakfast, arriving at my boarding-house by eleven o'clock, where a hearty welcome awaited me from Mrs. Dunbar and her daughters.

On going to my room, I there found the bed tossed, the wash bowl full of water, everything bearing traces of the room having been used the previous night; Mrs. Dunbar was close on my heels, and before I could turn to her for an explanation, exclaimed in an apologetic manner—

“Mr. Denham gave me your message about your paying for your room while you were absent, but I just took the liberty of putting a gentleman into it last night; he has engaged to occupy a room in the house at least once a week through the whole year, sometimes requiring it four days in the week, and is to pay me hotel prices, two dollars and a half a day; I was afraid to lose such a chance, so I put him into your room for one night; I will furnish one of the attics, so that when he comes again he may have my own room, and the girls and I will go up stairs for the time he remains; he says he often brings his wife with him, and then he pays double, and fancy, he is never to dine here, always at a restaurant in town.”

I assured her that there was no harm done provided I could now have my room without intrusion from a stranger, adding, “that I hope the gentleman did not expect to sleep in it to-night.”

“Oh! no, he only wanted it for one night this week; next week he will be here four days. Just

fancy," said she, her face very plainly expressing the satisfaction she felt, "ten dollars for only sleeping in the house four nights you may say; he engaged the room last night about tea time, but did not come until about nine o'clock; I offered him a cup of tea when he came in, but he said he had had tea at the Mayor's house; he generally took tea with one of his friends, so that he might spend a social evening, and this morning he was off before eight to be in time for the train going West, and only took a cup of coffee and about an inch of dry toast, paying down his two dollars and a half, and shaking hands with myself and my daughters as if he had been an old friend before he went away; he says he slept so sound, our house is so quiet, which you know it is, and he has been in the habit of going to the St. Lawrence since his business brought him to Montreal, and he says one can never sleep half the night there, with opening and shutting of doors, and it stands to reason it would be so in such a place as that, full of casual boarders; it was himself who made the terms; I would never think of asking so much, but he said that was what he always paid in the hotels where he was half the time kept awake, it was only fair he should pay the same price where he had a large room and sound sleep."

Mrs. Dunbar was in high glee with the prospect of making so much money so easily, and I felt pleased that the use of my room had been instrumental in helping to procure it; she was now in a fair way of

making what she called the two ends of the year meet, a consummation which, with all her hard work, she had been unable hitherto to attain.

I waited rather impatiently for twelve o'clock, the hour which the Curé told me visitors were admitted into the hospital of "The Holy Cross." At the appointed hour I was there in waiting. On ringing at the lattice, I was answered by its being opened and the head of a lay nun appearing within, who asked in French, what I wanted.

I at once showed the Curé's letter, saying that I wanted to see a patient, and had been furnished with this letter by the priest at Isle Jesus, as an introduction to the Lady Superior.

This was evidently an "open sesame," as at once another larger wicket was unlocked, through which I was admitted into the court yard, in the centre of which the convent stood. A wondrous place it seemed to me, accustomed as I was in my early girlhood to the convents of France, I had never seen anything like the one now before me, the immense size of the place, the great height of the ponderous walls made of unhewn stone, in which from their thickness the small windows seemed to be sunk, the solemn stillness of the place, not a soul to be seen except the quiet nun and myself, gave me a feeling of awe and wonder which I had never experienced before.

I was admitted to the convent by a postern door, where the nun who preceded me dipped her fingers in a stone vessel containing Holy water, reverently

crossing herself before entering the long narrow passage that led into an entrance room, the windows of which, placed high up in the wall, were of a pale colored glass; shining through them the noonday sun came with a softened light on the beautifully clean floor and benches, giving a beauty not their own to the colored prints illustrative of Scripture and other religious subjects, which hung on the wall.

I observed that here as well as at the door I entered by, the vessel containing the Holy water was of beautifully cut and polished stone, the outside made to resemble the undulating waves of a calm sea.

I sat some time waiting patiently for the appearance of the prioress, who the nun had left me to go in search of; at last she came, looking at me with a scrutinizing glance, which seemed to take in myself and all I had upon me, down to the very point of my parasol. She said—

“ You have a letter for the Superior from Monsieur Le Curé of St. Martins ?” at same time holding out her hand to receive it.

To my surprise she at once opened the letter, and having perused it, she next examined my face, as if she would read down through my eyes to my soul, and see what was passing therein; after a second or two she said—

“ You wish to see one of the invalids.”

I replied, “ Yes, if possible, I wish to see her now.”

"I cannot tell you if you can be admitted to see her at all," was her reply, still continuing the same rigid scrutiny as before. "Is she a relative of yours?"

"No," replied I. "She is no relative, but I think she is a countrywoman of mine, and I wish to help her."

"How do you mean to do that?" inquired the nun.

"I do not know what help she needs until I see her," was my answer. "But in whatever way I can help her, either by money or otherwise, I will be willing to do so."

"If she has friends who are able to help her, why was she sent here as a pauper?"

"I did not know she was here until last night," was my reply. "Neither do her friends know of it yet."

"Are you her brother Smith's wife?" asked the nun, shewing plainly by her countenance and the tone of voice she used in speaking, that in this character I had made no very favorable impression on her mind.

"No, I am not married; my name is Ruth St. Clare," replied I. "And the man who calls himself Smith is not her brother, nor is his name Smith."

"What is his name?"

"Captain Percy," replied I. The nun asserted an authority in interrogating me, which I felt myself as unable to dispute as I would have been twenty

years before to refuse answering questions put to me by my mother.

"And what relation is Captain Percy to this young woman?" was her next question.

"He is her husband; at least if she is the person I think she is, he is her husband."

"Then what right have you to interfere between a man and his wife? she was placed here by the Indian, who brought her to be taken care of until Smith would claim her."

"I do not wish to interfere between Captain and Mrs. Percy, but Captain Percy is now married to another woman, and nearly two years ago he wrote an account to Lady Gordon of her daughter's (his first wife's) death, since then she has been concealed in the hut of the Indian in Isle Jesus, and was brought here by her own wish; if you speak English she will tell you this herself."

"I do not speak English, but I can easily find one who does; are you aware that the young woman is ill with nervous fever, and that it is not at all likely she will live?" said the nun with a stern face.

"No, I did not know that; I knew she was paralyzed, but not that she was ill of fever."

The nun had continued standing all this time as if she wished to shew me I was an intruder, and that she fain would be rid of my presence, and now said sharply,

"You do not seem to know much about her; you

said a few minutes ago, 'if she is the person I think she is;' before we waste more time in speaking on the subject, it would be well to ascertain if this young woman is really the person you think she is; if you are shewn the invalid, you will of course know whether she is the one you seek?"

"I do not know that I would," replied I. "I never saw her; I have only seen pictures which are said to be life-like representations of her, but a simple way of ascertaining if the lady in your hospital is the one I seek, would be to ask her in English if she is Lady Gordon of Rockgirtisle's daughter."

"Well," replied the nun quickly, and with an air of satisfaction, as if she now saw the way clearly by which she could get rid of me at once, "she cannot be spoken to now with any reasonable hope of finding out who she is; she is nearly all the time raving, and thence could give no reasonable answer to any question whatever, but you can come every day to ask how she is, and as soon as it is possible to put the question you propose to her, it shall be done, and her answer duly reported to you."

With these words she turned to leave me; I was in despair; it was evident that I was to be turned out of the convent without even seeing her whom I had now thought, and talked myself into being sure, was the one I had crossed the sea to find. And what was worse, she was liable at any moment to be found out and removed by Captain Percy; it was as if I had the philosopher's stone in my grasp, and by my

inability to hold it fast, it was slipping in the depths of the sea. I was at my wit's end, when all of a sudden I thought of the money in my pocket, and determined to try its potent power to move. I at once produced my pocket-book and found there forty dollars, the last of one hundred I had drawn just previous to my accident, the rest having been consumed in paying the doctor's bill and my double board in Montreal and at Monsieur Joinnette's. The money was in four ten dollar bills; handing these to the prioress, I said—

“There are forty dollars which I wish to be applied in paying for the board of Mrs. Percy; will ten dollars a week be enough? if not, do not hesitate to say so, any sum you please to charge will be thankfully paid: if she lives, she can repay your trouble and kindness with a thousand dollars if she will, and if she dies, I will pay any sum you think proper, if I am only allowed to stay by her, and to minister to her comfort for the short time she may have to live, and be put in possession of her body when she dies.”

The nun examined the notes, and holding them loosely in her hand for a second or two, subjected my face to another scrutiny, if possible more searching than the first; however her interest was evidently excited, and seating herself by me, she said with a grave yet not an unkind air—

“I cannot understand you; your story is altogether a confused and most incredible one, and it is mixed

up with a young woman around whom there is certainly some mystery ; you say you came here to seek a person who is no relative of yours, whom you have never seen, and yet you are willing to pay the large sum of ten dollars a week while she lives, on condition that you are allowed to attend to her sick bed and obtain possession of her body at her death. Now the mildest construction I can put on the circumstances as they appear to me is, that this young woman is the possessor of property, which, if she dies, you or perhaps your friends will inherit, on producing her body as the evidence of her dissolution ; why did you not go to attend her in the Indian's hut where her child died ? that was certainly no proper place for a lady of the rank and fortune you claim for her, to reside ; you were very lax in your attention to her for nearly two years, yet it is evident by your face as well as your words and actions, that you have some strong motive for what you do, when you are willing to risk forty dollars to obtain an interview with one who you acknowledge after all may not be the person you think she is ; if your motive in seeking this woman is really a good one, and that you wish to benefit her and not yourself, you had better tell me the plain unvarnished truth, but beware that you tell me the truth only ; it will be severely tested, and it seems to me that Smith, who says he is her brother, and whom you say is her husband, has had more real care and kindness for the poor woman than any one else ; he is of course a man who has to earn his bread, few

independent European gentlemen come here, yet he pays in her behalf for nearly two years, what is a very good board to this Indian and his wife, and moreover has placed one hundred dollars in the Curé of St. Martin's hands to defray the expense of her interment.

"The Indian did not speak favorably as to the man's kindness in manner to his sister, or wife, whichever she is, but certainly judging from what you have said, his care of her creature comforts, poor as they may have been, would contrast favorably with the neglect of her mother, whom you represent as being a Grand British Seigneuress. Why did she suffer her child to pine in sickness for two years in the hut of a savage, attended only by his squaw? and now, when she is on her dying bed, and comparatively speaking, is comfortably cared for, her friends send to obtain possession of her, living or dead, at almost any cost; there is surely some need of explanation here."

I had been strictly enjoined by Mr. Morton, and also by old Mr. Seaton of Thurlow, to conceal carefully the object of my mission to Canada, but I had been obliged already to divulge it in part to the prioress, and I felt that if I was to obtain permission to see Mrs. Percy, it could only be had by a free statement of the whole facts of the case.

While the nun was yet speaking, I had determined on sending a cable telegram to Mr. Morton; I had even decided upon the words to be used, "I think

Mrs. Percy is found alive, come out quickly," and had mentally counted and shortened them, so that while the telegram was as terse as possible, my meaning would be clearly understood, and I well knew, from what I had been a witness to, when Captain Percy threw down the harp in Lady Gordon's drawing-room, that these words would bring Mr. Morton out with all speed; yet haste as he would, there were three thousand miles of waves to be crossed, with all the chances attending storm and tide, ere he could be here to aid Margaret Gordon in what seemed to be the crisis of her fate. Were she again to fall into Captain Percy's hands, he would take care she should now be buried in some deeper fastness than the last, while he himself would be gone also, or under some assumed name, hidden in the midst of civilization, as he had been from my ken in Montreal for months back, until a mere chance revealed his being there; or perhaps (horrible thought) impelled by fear of the fate which would be sure to overtake him in the event of his crimes becoming known, he would himself accomplish the purpose he had in vain tried to bribe the Indian and Monsieur Joinnette to do for him.

Another contingency, and one which from the nun's account of Mrs. Percy's health, seemed to be the one most likely to occur, was her death taking place, while perhaps the reaction which hope would be sure to bring, were she aware that the strong hand of the law would be speedily put in force to

prevent Captain Percy's having henceforth any power over her, might now be the means of saving her.

These thoughts crowding one upon another on my mind, I answered the nun with as much composure as I could force myself to assume.

"I will tell you all I know of Lady Gordon's daughter, whom I believe to be now in your hospital, and also all I know of the man who calls himself Smith, and may claim her as either his sister or wife, whichever name suits his purpose for the time; I will leave it to yourself to judge, as to what is right and just to be done, and I will abide by what you say for the present, as under the circumstances I must do; I cannot force conviction upon your mind; it is hard for me to do so because your preconceived ideas are against me, but whether my story is credited or not, I will send a cablegram to Britain this afternoon, which will quickly stir the highest Law authorities in Scotland, to aid the lady who now fills a pauper's bed in your hospital."

As I spoke, the strength and presence of mind I so admired in Lady Gordon, and which she possessed in such an eminent degree, seemed infusing itself into my own, and I looked in the face of the nun with a determination of purpose and resolution, which half an hour previous I would have deemed impossible, overawed as I then was by the strangeness of the scene around me, the air of sanctity which seemed to pervade the whole place, and fill my soul with feelings of reverence never experienced before;

From the moment I entered the great door with its heavy iron fastenings, and looked around on niche and wall, where statue and picture alike were placed to excite, and a dimmed light came streaming in through windows stained with pictured images in glowing colors, to foster and keep alive such reverential frames of mind, until the prioress stood before me, her finely cut features, grave face, her superiority of manner, which seemed in her to be natural, not assumed ; all agreeing so well with the simple beauty yet severity of the conventual costume, a holy calm pervading the very air around her, her countenance never for a moment changed its expression of quiet repose ; I might as well have stood on the highway and read the thoughts of the passers by in the imprint left by their feet in the sand, as endeavor to read in the still pale face of the nun, the impression my words had made.

"Go on," said she ; "time passes, say what you wish me to hear, and be as concise as possible."

I did so, and in as few words as I could use, to make my narrative clearly understood, I detailed to her as much of Mrs. Percy's history as seemed to me necessary, not forgetting the exact description given me by Joinnette of Captain Percy, while he portrayed the man calling himself Smith, as the latter endeavored to make the simple *habitant* in his need, the instrument by which he was to rid himself of his wife.

While I spoke, the nun never for one moment re-

laxed her gaze from off my face; when I finished, she sat for some minutes with her hand covering her eyes, as if concentrating her ideas on what she had been listening to, and thereby enabling herself to come to a definite conclusion as to what was best to be done; at last she uncovered her eyes, and said, speaking slowly, as if considering and weighing every word she spoke—

“You have told me a thrilling narrative; one discrepancy among others occurs to me—this one greater than all the rest.—Why did Lady Gordon send a stranger who had never seen her daughter, on such an errand? A woman of her influence must have had many among her friends who would gladly do her bidding, and who knew and could recognize at a glance the face of her daughter; how came it about that one who had never seen her, one whom she had never seen, was chosen for such an enterprise? thus almost defeating the very purpose she went to serve; had you known the face of this unfortunate lady, you would have stopped the waggon on its way here.”

“What you say is true, but this inability in me, did not of course present itself to the mind of Lady Gordon, nor do I believe she despaired of ultimately going in search of her child herself until an hour or two previous to her death; the morning of the day on which it occurred, she spoke with hope of being able to go on the contemplated journey to the East Indies herself; I was the one she had from the

first fixed on as her companion, had she gone ; I was intimately acquainted with all her plans, and knew exactly how each was to be carried out ; I have no doubt, had the want you allude to been thought of by her Ladyship, I would have still been chosen to carry on the work, but doubtless another would have accompanied me, whose knowledge of Mrs. Percy's face would have supplied my lack ; as it was, this want in myself did not occur to me, until I knew that I had looked at without recognizing her."

"Do you think you could, by merely seeing her," replied the nun, "be able to decide if this person in the hospital is really the one you seek ? as far as the evidence goes you have no proof positive of her being so ; it is true the evidence is in favor of it, but one word from the woman herself might ignore all this, and unless we are convinced that she is the person you represent her to be, we have no authority whatever by which we could refuse to give her up to Smith, were he to come this day to demand her. This Smith may be the same person as Captain Percy, and yet this woman not be Margaret Gordon ; she may be his sister, as he claims her to be ; this is more likely to be the case than that he should have feigned the death of his wife, a lady of fortune, by whose death he had all to lose and nothing to gain."

We are poor vacillating creatures, swayed about by every wind of doctrine ; an hour ago I could have laid my hand on the Evangel and said that my solemn conviction was, that the one we talked about

was Lady Gordon's daughter; since I had listened to the nun's last words, I asked myself was it not much more likely that she was indeed Captain Percy's sister, not his wife, and that her seclusion from the world was agreed on for private reasons, by his family as well as himself.

The perfect faith in Mrs Percy's death entertained by the young woman I had seen in Kay's Hotel, every argument I had ever used to convince myself of the utter fallacy of believing she could still be in life, and they were many, came crowding into my mind at once, and I replied in a feeble undecided way,

"I think I would be able to recognize Mrs. Percy's features if I had time given me to look at her for some minutes, without fear of disturbing her."

"As to that," replied the nun, "we must consult the sister who has charge of the invalid." As she spoke she opened a little window in the wall of the room and requested some one within to go in search of Sister St. Nativity.

In a few minutes Sister St. Nativity made her appearance, and at once agreed to my seeing the patient in question, saying that it would not disturb her in the least, one or two visitors to other patients had stopped at her bed, attracted by her appearance, and she did not seem to notice or heed them at all.

The prioress then led the way, and while following her, accompanied by Sister St. Nativity, I asked the latter if she had hopes of the ultimate recovery of the patient we were going to see?

"I dare say she may recover," replied the nun, "but I do not think it is at all desirable; I understand enough of English to know that all desire is merged in one, and that one is for death, which she hopes will reunite her to those she has lost; the first day she came she seemed a little cheerful, since then every day as it has risen, has found her more depressed and in a lower state physically than the previous; the journey she took was too long, and taken in too rough a vehicle; she has never recovered from the effects of it, and probably never will; she is utterly prostrated; I think she raves continually while asleep, but in a feeble quiet way; she never opens her eyes more than half; nothing rouses her."

We were at the door of the sick dormitory, and Sister St. Nativity took precedence when we entered, that she might point out the bed of the one we sought; this was scarcely necessary, the beautiful fair face and head, with its wealth of pale brown hair falling back from her face and round her neck and shoulders in wavy folds, was in striking contrast to the other faces lying on the beds we passed ere reaching hers, some of which were in truth beautiful, but the skin was invariably soft and brown or sallow, the eyes black or brown.

When we came up to the bed of the English girl, as Sister St. Nativity called her, the latter placed me at the foot so that I might have full opportunity of seeing while the nun spoke to her, and ascertained if she was awake; she was lying with closed eyes,

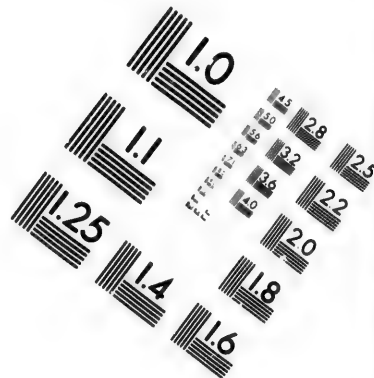
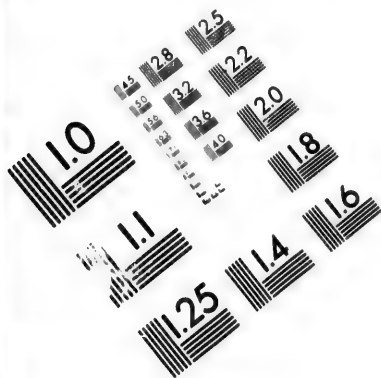
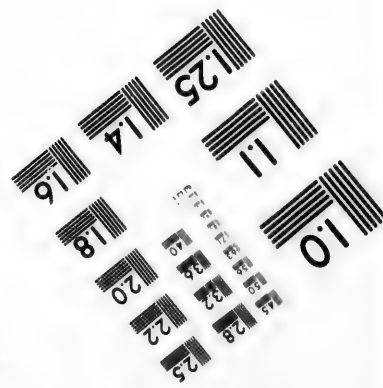
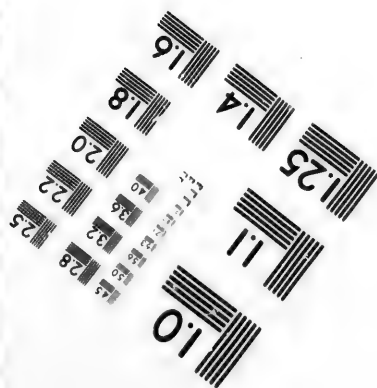
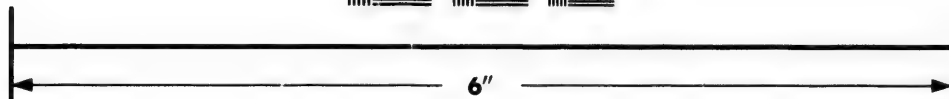
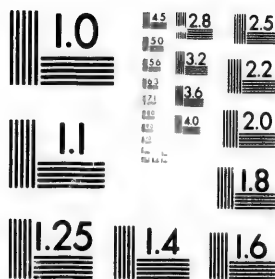
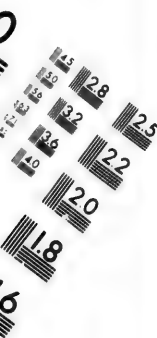


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and unlike the time when I saw her pass in the waggon, when she was quite pale, the fever had now given a slight hectic to her cheek, both arms lay outside the white quilt, the hands not very small but beautifully shaped, just as I had heard them described many and many a time, but the two rings which were to be the mark by which I was to distinguish Mrs. Percy's dead body were not there; there was no ring on either hand! I felt my heart grow faint and sick, and my eyes dim, as I looked.

"You wake, poor child?" asked the nun, in her broken English.

The fair head turned on its pillow; a faint sad smile played for an instant round the red full lips, a second more the eyelids opened wide and then slowly closed again over the soft dark grey orbs, but in that second I had seen the original of the Cabinet picture!

Almost unconsciously my lips gave utterance to the thoughts passing in my heart, and I said in a low voice, "Oh! yes, that is Lady Gordon's daughter."

As I spoke, the invalid moved her hand back and forth uneasily on the pillow, saying in a low voice—

"I want Mamma."

"*Oui, pauvre enfant*, you get Mamma," said sister St. Nativity soothingly, but it seemed to have a contrary effect, as immediately she rocked her head again, saying in accents a little louder than before.

"I want Mamma."

Those words were spoken with Lady Gordon's voice; if the two rings were missing the face and voice testified to me clearly, the lost was found, the dead alive!

But I knew well that a better testimony than mine would be required to convince the prioress, and even with the thought came another, that Sandy Mitchell had been sent across the sea by Margaret Gordon's Father in Heaven to give this testimony.

Sister St. Nativity motioned to the prioress and myself to begone; she evidently feared an accession of the fever, which although slow and undefined in its character, was consuming the life of the poor invalid but too surely.

When we had reached the door of the dormitory, I stopped, and touching lightly the arm of the nun to attract her notice, I said—

"It has just now occurred to me that a young brother of Lady Gordon's housekeeper, one not quite so old as Mrs. Percy, is within a few miles of Montreal; he must know her face well, as he has seen her and been familiar with her appearance from his boyhood; he came to Canada in the same vessel as I did, and in conversation with him then, he told me many anecdotes of Mrs. Percy both previous to and after her marriage; I can get him to satisfy you as to her indenture; as to myself I am certain it is Lady Gordon's daughter, and no other who lies on yonder bed. I suppose you will take the testimony of this lad until her friends arrive from Scotland?"

"It is probable the Superior will," replied the nun, speaking slowly, as if while she spoke, her thoughts were otherwise occupied. "But you will excuse me for saying what I do; you are a stranger to us, and the community must be very careful how it acts; were we to refuse giving up the invalid to Smith, unless we had the most undoubted authority as to her really being the one you say, and that all the circumstances you have detailed are true, we might be involving ourselves in a law suit which would give the superior much trouble, and perhaps cost thousands of dollars. In sending for this young man, I should wish you to give us his address; two of the lay sisters will bring him here, and you can wait until he comes."

"I will gladly give his address," replied I, and taking a card from my card case, I wrote on the back the address of Sandy Mitchell at Mrs. Campbell's son-in-law's, and handed it to the prioress. "And in the meanwhile, instead of idling away my time here, I will go to Doctor Balfour, of whom I spoke to you before, and get him to send a cablegram to inform Mrs. Percy's friends that she is found."

"Yes, do," replied the nun, in a more friendly voice than she had yet used. "It is always well to use our time, and not to abuse it in idleness; I suppose as you are going to Doctor Balfour's, and he lives at the further end of Sherbrooke street, you will have to take a cab? In this case the lay sisters will go in the same conveyance; your way lies in

the same direction," looking as she spoke at the card she held in her hand. "They can leave you there, and call for you on their return; this will save an unnecessary expense; I will send for the cab, and on your return you can pay for it."

I at once agreed to this, at same time wondering at the trouble the prioress took in sending two of the lay nuns for Sandy Mitchell, an office I could have as well performed myself. When I knew more of the convent and its ways, I understood why all this trouble was taken; it was to prevent my having any communication with Sandy Mitchell, previous to her own personal investigation of him, as to what he knew of the invalid and her precedents.

The cab man must have been within call, as in a few minutes we were seated inside, and shortly after I was left at Doctor Balfour's door.

I told the good doctor all I had heard and seen since I last saw him, and my firm conviction that Sandy Mitchell would recognize at once in the occupant of the sick bed, Lady Gordon's daughter.

He was delighted with the news I gave him, and dilated on his own far-sightedness in having always said Mrs. Percy was yet alive; when I mentioned to him my intention of the same evening sending a cable telegram, he approved highly of this, as it would bring Mr. Morton to my aid at least a fortnight sooner than a letter would do, adding however—

"If you send your cablegram to-morrow it will be equally in time as if it went to-night; the steamer

does not sail from Glasgow until Friday; by telegraphing early to-morrow you give him three days to prepare for his journey."

This was satisfactory to me, as I had already given the nun all my available funds out of the bank, and on consulting my watch I found it was now within half an hour of the time the bank would shut for the day.

The nuns were not long in finding out and returning with Sandy Mitchell, who I saw, as he sat on the dickey beside the driver, had spruced himself up in his Sunday clothes for the occasion. As I bade goodbye to the Reverend Doctor, he begged of me to come to him early on the morrow and let him know the result of Sandy's interview with the invalid, at same time warning me neither to speak to nor otherwise notice the young man at present, as it was evidently the desire of the nuns to prevent any communication between us.

We reached the convent, and were duly ushered into the presence of the prioress, who either by accident or design, was seated in the same room as I had first seen her; as I entered she motioned me to take a seat by the door, and beckoning to Sandy, placed him near herself at the further end of the room; having done this she opened a glass door just opposite to where I sat, disclosing as she did so an old grey haired man, dressed in the long black robe worn by the priests in Montreal, and seated by a table, on which rested a well worn book, which he was occupied in reading, moving his lips as if he

pronounced each word in doing so ; she stopped for a second or two in the doorway which was close by the table at which the old man read, and having thus attracted his attention to herself, said in French, the tone of her voice and manner while speaking evincing the reverence she felt for the person addressed.

"Father, the young Englishman is here, as also the lady, will you examine him in private?"

"No," was the reply. "I will speak to him in presence of both yourself and the lady, and also hear what he has to say."

As the priest spoke, he rose and entered the outer apartment, displaying as he did so a tall and (notwithstanding his age which could not have been less than seventy years) graceful figure, with a finely shaped face and head. As he entered, his keen dark eye took in at a glance all who were in the room ; moving his head slightly in acknowledgement of my presence as his eye encountered mine ; I had then never seen a prince ; I have since seen more than one, but I have never seen prince or peer, who in graceful dignity or courtly air, would bear comparison with that old man in a priest's garment.

As he approached the upper end of the room where Sandy stood, he desired the lad to take off his hat speaking English in an accent as purely English as his French was French. The poor lad did as he was bid, in manifest confusion at his own neglect ; the convent with its massive walls and doors, the stained

glass windows, the pictures of saints, the nuns in their black dresses and white hoods, all so different to what he had ever seen in his own Scottish home, had evidently so occupied his attention as to completely monopolize all his faculties to an entire forgetfulness of self. The nun, it is true, had more than once said to him in accents the last time far from mild, "*Otez votre chapeau,*" but the poor lad, in his entire ignorance of her language, paid no attention whatever to the injunction, and, warned by Doctor Balfour, I would not have spoken to him had he been guilty of a much greater breach of politeness.

"You are a Scotchman, I presume?" began the priest.

"I am that, Sir," replied Sandy, looking at his interrogator with a self confidence I was pleased to see him assume.

"What is your name?" was the next question.

"Sandy Mitchell."

"Were you, while in Scotland, connected with any family of rank?" inquired the priest, watching the young man's face closely as he spoke.

"No, no," replied Sandy, speaking quickly, as if he would instantly disclaim any pretension to a higher station in life than his own. "We are all just farmer folk; all my friends by Mother's and Father's side both are just farmer folk."

The priest understood him thoroughly, and put his question in another form, using a term in so

doing, which showed plainly that he himself had at one time resided in, or at all events passed through the country of which he spoke, and knew the familiar form of speech belonging to its denizens.

"I do not speak of your relatives; I wish to know if you were acquainted with any of the gentles where you lived?"

"Oh! aye," replied the lad, as if at once on familiar ground. "I kent all the Grand Gordons round about Edinburgh and Leith well enough; my sister Marion is house-keeper at Lady Gordon's in Leith, an' I lived at the big house myself for two or three years, when I was a little chap."

"Then you know all Lady Gordon's children?"

"Yes, I know them all very well."

"How many daughters had she?"

"That's easy counted, she had only one."

"Was Lady Gordon's daughter the eldest or youngest of the family?"

"She was neither the ane nor the ither; she had two brothers aulder than her and ane younger. Sir Robert is the youngest."

"That was rather a strange thing, how did the youngest son come to inherit his father's title?"

"Na, it wasna a strange thing at a'," replied Sandy, apparently a little nettled, as if he thought the priest's words implied a doubt of his veracity, and expressing himself as we all do under excitement in the tongue of his early days. "Maister Reginald

gaed awa lang sine, an' hasna sent word hame for mony a year, so naebody kens gin he's livin' or dead, an Maister Evan deed lang ago afore Sir Alexander ; but I canna be answering ony more of yer questions ; the two women at came for me, said I was wanted to see a sick woman fae Scotland or else I would na hae come ; the folk up at the farm are very busy wi' the harvest-work, an I'm but a hired man, I have nae time to be palavering here ; I better go an' see the woman the noo."

The priest looked a little perplexed, and I said to him in French, my veil still covering my face as I had worn it since leaving Doctor Balfour's.

"You had better tell him that it is to do good to the Gordon family, and save them from trouble, that he is asked these questions." The priest acting on my suggestions said—

"As you have known these Grand Gordons in your young days and served them too, I suppose you would be glad to do them a kindness, if you could do so without much trouble to yourself. It is believed that one of the family is now in circumstances of great peril ; by remaining here until you answer all the questions I choose to put to you, you may enable me to rescue the person I allude to from this evil ; are you willing to do this ?"

"Yes, I'm willing to stay and answer your questions if its goin' to do good to ony o' Lady Gordon's family ; say on, I'll stay here all day if you like ; my day's wage is but a small affair, an' my master can

keep that for the loss o' my time ; I would go through the river at midnight for ony o' the Gordon family."

The priest smiled, evidently amused as well as pleased, by the impetuosity with which the young man spoke, and replying, "no such sacrifice as that will be required of you," resumed his interrogations.

"I suppose Sir Robert is a Baronet in right of his father?"

"Oh! aye, the're all Barons or something mair, the Gordons," replied Sandy in a careless tone, as if that at least was a superfluous question, which in truth it appeared to me.

"Where is Sir Robert Gordon now?"

"I reckon he's at Rockgirtisle Castle where he aye bides."

"Where is Lady Gordon's daughter?"

"I cannot tell you that, Sir; I wish I could," replied the young man in a grave manner, and with a soft pathos of voice almost sorrowful.

"Is she married?"

"Yes, Sir, she was married with an English gentleman, an officer."

"What is his name?"

"Captain Percy."

"Where is Captain Percy?"

"I think he's in this town; I have seen him twice since I came here; I saw him last Friday."

"It is probable then that his wife is with him?"

"May be she is," replied Sandy. "But the wife

that's with him is no Miss Gordon. I told you before that I didna know anything about it; a year afore Lady Gordon died there came word from India that Mrs. Percy was dead, but Lady Gordon would never hear to its being true, and my sister Marion thinks it's a got up story too."

"When did Lady Gordon die?"

"She died in the Spring, between four and five months sine."

"Then you say that Lady Gordon lived a year after she heard of her daughter's death, not believing it to be true; she must in all that time have made some endeavor to find this out."

"I cannot tell that; it's no likely that a servant man like me wad hear everything 'at her Ladyship did, but I did hear that she was going to India to seek out Mrs. Percy and bring her home, but she took a paralatic, and after that I'm thinking she never rose from her bed till she died, but Miss St. Clare, that was Master Charles' and Miss Leonora's governess came here in the same ship that I did, to try and find Mrs. Percy. Lady Gordon left a lot o' money for that; they think she's here now, but the last time I saw Miss St. Clare she said she could get no word of her, living or dead; maybe I'm doing what I should na, telling you, for Miss St. Clare said she was na going to tell anybody, but if it's no for good the sin be on your head; you said you wanted to take some o' the family out o' trouble, an' it's for that I tell'd you."

"You have done no harm, my man, in anything you have told me ; if what you have said will have any effect it will be for good to those you wish to serve ; I think you may now go and see the sick woman."

The priest now spoke a few words in an undertone to the prioress, and Sister St. Nativity, who had entered the room a few minutes before ; they were evidently favorably impressed by what they heard from the priest, and led by the latter, we all moved in the direction of the hospital.

On entering the dormitory where the supposed Mrs. Percy lay, Sister St. Nativity placed myself and the prioress as she had formerly done, at the bottom of the invalid's bed, so that we could see her while she could not see us without sitting up, thus avoiding as much as possible exciting the patient ; the priest stood behind the nun and myself, while the hospital nun, motioning to Sandy, who on leaving the reception room had replaced his hat on his head, and now wore it, seemingly unheeded by the priest, brought him to the bedside of the patient, directed to do so by the priest.

"Man, come see *vous pauvre enfant*," said Sister St. Nativity, bending kindly over the pale face, which lay with closed eyes in almost the same position it had occupied in the morning ; the invalid neither moved nor spoke, and to my grief, Sandy gazed on the pale face as if it were one he had never seen ; both nuns and the priest exchanged significant

glances, while I fancied a shade of regret passed over the face of the prioress.

"Poor young lady, she's very sick like," said Sandy, speaking his thoughts more than addressing himself to any one. As he spoke, the heavy eyelids were slowly raised, disclosing the full grey eye which fixed itself on Sandy's face; no sign of recognition there either; my heart felt as if sinking within me, all hope was over now; this fair woman could not be the one I sought; and as this conviction forced itself upon me, I felt more sorrow for the poor invalid, exposed as she would now be, unaided by human help, to the man Smith, who so surely sought her life, than disappointment in not having found Mrs. Percy as I supposed I had, great as that disappointment was; and I resolved to devote the money I had earned by coming to Canada in trying to save this poor young woman from her persecutor.

I looked helplessly in the face of the prioress, whose eyes expressed a pitiful regret, as they looked on the beautiful head before us; my eyes took the direction of her's, the vacant look had left the face, the eyes were dilated, and full of an expression intense with delight, the blood mounting to her cheek, the half opening lips, the whole face speaking eloquently of life and beauty. Sandy Mitchell seemed under the influence of some powerful feeling which transfixed him with astonishment; he took one step forward nearer to the bed, and seizing his hat, threw it on the floor, exclaiming as he did so—

"Oh! Miss Tiny, is that you?"

"Sandy Mitchell, when did you come?" almost simultaneously bursting from the lips of the beautiful invalid.

No more was needed—Lady Gordon's daughter was found—indeed and in truth. Covering my face with my hands, that I might hide the foolish tears which would fall like rain, repress them as I might, I said aloud to our Father in Heaven, in thankfulness of heart such as I had never before felt, and which must find utterance or die—

"Thank God! Thank God!"

A soft "Amen" from the lips of the old grey haired priest recalled me to the scene before me.

Mrs. Percy had stretched out both her white hands, and as I looked, took Sandy's great brown hand between her own, and pressed it as he had been her brother, while she again repeated her question—

"When did you come?"

The poor fellow was much in the same case as myself, his tears falling like a child's; at last he was able to sob out—

"I came with Miss St. Clare, who Lady Gordon ordered in her will was to be sent for you."

The invalid looked in his eyes as if she would read there what he meant.

"Miss St. Clare, Sandy, who is that? I don't recollect Miss St. Clare."

"No, mem," replied Sandy. "She's nobody you know, she's only Master Charles' and Miss Leonora's governess, but Lady Gordon shewed her great respect, and took her to her own table, and they say she's well book-learned."

While Sandy Mitchell spoke, the poor invalid's face resumed its sad expression, and she said piteously—

"That was long ago, Sandy. Did she live with Mamma after Charlie and Ora died?"

The lad's face flushed up, as with a voice of dismay, half choked with emotion, he said—

"Master Charles and Missy both dead! when did they die, mem?"

"Oh! Sandy, did you not know? they died more than a year ago."

Sandy's face brightened, and again as quickly became overcast; looking at Mrs. Percy, with a sober serious air, he said—

"No, mem, begging your pardon for contradicting one like your Ladyship; your mistaen, the children were well and hearty the day her Ladyship was buried; I made two little wooden boats about the size o' my hand, an put sails on them, and took them up to them that afternoon, after her Ladyship's body was taen to the mausoleum, and Madame Peltier hided them in her black apron for fear Marion would see them, and her and me took the children, to the little pond at the far off end of the fruit garden, where they couldna see us from the windows, the leaves

were all out sae thick, an beautiful an green, an I tied great long strings of cord (that Betty gave me out of the pantry) to the boats, and then set them sailing in the pond, Master Charles wi' one string and Missy wi' the other, ye never saw how delighted they were; Missy lost hold of her string clapping her hands, an' I had to put off my shoes and stockings (saving your presence) and wade in for the boat; they were both crying for fear it would be lost, and after all the pains we had hiding the boats from Marion, the children told her all about the fun they had when they came home to their tea! Marion was as mad as a March hare, and put all the blame on my shoulders; she said she wadna have it kent in Edinburgh or Leith for twenty pound,—'at the day of Lady Gordon's burial should be keepit like the Sabbath, and I kent that well enough mysel, but I thought it was no sin to let the bairns play themsels a wee while down in the back garden, where nae-body saw them."

Mrs. Percy's eyes were full of tears which slowly coursed each other down her face, as Sandy spoke of her children, and the home and grounds so familiar and so dear; when he had ceased speaking, she pressed one hand to her forehead, passing it once or twice across, her countenance meanwhile wearing a bewildered expression; then with the same piteous look as before, regarding the young man steadfastly as she spoke, she said—

"You must be right, Sandy, my mind is sometimes

so confused, I dare say I mix things up, when did the children die?"

"The children are not dead, mem," replied Sandy, with a steady voice and look, yet with a sadness in both which told plainly that he fancied the poor mother's wits were astray, an idea strongly impressed on my own mind.

"Oh! yes, Sandy," replied she, closing her eyes as she spoke, with a sad weary look, "they are both dead and buried long long ago; more than a year since; I have counted every day and hour of the long weary time."

"I beg your pardon again, mem, for contradicting a lady like yourself," replied Sandy, his Scotch accent coming out strongly in the resolute way he spoke, "but the children were both strong and well the day before I left Leith, and that's not five months yet; I went up to the house in the morning early, before they were out of their beds and Marion took me up to the nursery to see them in their little cots, and they both wakened up as fresh as little birds, and when Marion told them I was going to the place their Mamma was in, they both cried out in one breath—

"Oh! Sandy, tell Mamma to come home;" as he spoke the lad's face crimsoned up with something very like shame, and diving his hand into one of his pockets he produced a small parcel wrapped up in white writing paper, from which he took a narrow piece of dark blue velvet which looked as if it had been worn on the neck, and a child's coral necklace

of large round beads, with a broad antique gold clasp, on which, even at the distance I stood, I saw a crest deeply engraved, and handing both to Mrs. Percy said—

“I forgot all about this, though I’ve kept it in my sabbath coat pocket ever since I got it; When Miss Leonora was bidding me goodbye, she took off her necklace and said to me, ‘the first time you see Mamma, give her this necklace, and tell her it is a present from Missy, and I want her to come home.’ Madame Peltier spoke to her in French, and I was so accustomed to be with them, that I knew well enough that she forbade her to give away her necklace, but Marion said, ‘Certainly, Miss Leonora, send it to your Mamma, it was her’s before it was your’s, and her own name is on it; I’m glad you thought of sending it,’ and then nothing would do with Master Charlie but he must send something too, and he wanted to send the black ribbon that was laid out to put on with his collar, but Marion said it would not be lucky to send black, and bid Madame bring his blue velvet, so now you have them both, Mem; when I brought them home to our house, my mother made me put them in the pocket of my Sabbath coat; she said it was more likely I would see you when I had it on than when I was at my work, and if I kept them there, I would be sure to do Miss Leonora’s bidding, and give it to you the first time I saw you, but deed I was very like to have forgot it; everything here about, made me so confused like, and they didna tell me it was you

that they wanted me for; they did not even say it was a lady; if they had I would have jealoused it was you; I have a large parcel in my trunk that Marion sent; she said it was part of the things Lady Gordon was taking out with her if she had lived to come, but in course I never thought of bringing it; but it's no matter, it's only three miles to where I work; I can bring it yet before dark."

While he was speaking, Mrs. Percy gazed on his face with dilated eyeballs, her blue grey eyes looking like dark brown, her lips rigidly compressed, as if her heart was beating too hard, and she feared it might fail ere she could hear to the end what was to her of such intense interest, a red spot on each cheek deepening as he spoke; For a second or two after he had ceased speaking, a muscle of her face moved not; she seemed to fear disturbing the impression his words had made; at last lifting up the necklace and velvet she looked narrowly at both, and putting them inside the bosom of her night dress, turned again to Sandy, saying—

"Tell me truly, Sandy, is the old house sold for a brewery, and is the shrubbery full of brewer's barrels?"

Sandy gazed at her for a second or two as if dumb with dismay, every feature of his face and figure, as he stood with uplifted hands, expressive of the deep concern he felt, believing as he must have done, that she was giving utterance to the ravings of a disordered imagination,

"Lord help us, mem, what could put that in your head? there's nobody could sell the house or the land either, but yoursel' now that her Ladyship's dead' saving your presence, mem, you should not let yourself think on such terrible nonsense as that; the house is as well keepit as it was when Lady Gordon was livin', everything is ready waiting for you till you come home; and for the garden, the apples and plums are hanging thick enough on the trees there, I'll warrant; my father said he never saw a better show of fruit; he was in the garden all the time, I was in the nursery the morning before I came away, and he should ken about fruit trees, gin anybody should."

She still kept her eyes fixed on Sandy's face, the dilated pupils and the bright spot on her cheek fearfully apparent, and immediately he ceased speaking, she said, uttering her words calmly and slowly, as if she would convince him she was speaking the words of truth and soberness—

"Sandy, some one told me that Mamma had left her house and all her money away from me, is that true? do you know what her will is?"

"No Mem, I dont know what her Ladyship's will is, but I know one thing, that Marion is bidden by it to stay in the house till you come yoursel' and to keep everything ready for you if you should not come for fifty years; and if Marion dies before you come home, some other capable woman is to be put in her place, and Miss St. Clare, as I told you, was sent out to bring you home. The last time I saw her

she said she had not found out yet where you stopt; I know the place she bides in, I'll better go and bring her here; she can tell everything about the children, and her Ladyship, and all. Will I go for Miss St. Clare, Mem?"

The invalid closed her eyes, letting her head fall back on the pillow as if perfectly exhausted; lifting up her arms, she placed a hand on each side of her head, the fingers folding over each other on the top; she lay thus a few seconds, and then without opening her eyes, said—

"Oh! can this be reality, or is it a dream"?

"No, mem, it's no a dream," said Sandy, leaning a little more towards her, with an earnest serious face and manner. "But it was a dream sent by the enemy that made you think o' beer barrels in the garden o' Rockgirtisle House; I wish we had some Godly Minister to speak to you, he would soon put such like thoughts out o' your head; you might say 'Our Father which art in Heaven' and 'Now I lay me down to sleep' yoursel', mem, an ye would be the better o' it."

His words had touched some hidden chord, vibrating probably with some remembrances of her happy girlhood, and moving her soul almost to agony, sending a longing lingering look on the irrecallable past; sob after sob came fast and quick, and her tears fell as if her head were a fountain of waters; Sister St. Nativity motioned us all away, I thought none too soon.

Sandy came towards the priest, and asked in an under voice if he would go for Miss St. Clare; I did not now fear making him aware of my presence, and throwing up my veil, I lifted my finger, pressing it to my lips in token of silence.

Quietly as we moved, the poor sorrow-stricken one was attracted by the movement, and missing Sandy, she looked round, exclaiming quickly as she did so—

“Sandy, where are you? dont go away, you are to stay with me.”

“No mem,” replied he, turning round and going quickly towards the bed again. I’ll no go away; I’ll bide down the stair, maybe the ither ladies dinna care for me being here,” looking as he spoke at the beds on either side, which he of course supposed to contain ladies of equal rank with Mrs. Percy. “And when you want me to go a message or anything else, you can send her for me,” inclining his head as he spoke towards Sister St. Nativity.

The prioress laid her hand on his arm, and motioned him to follow her which he did; looking back however once or twice to the bed where Mrs. Percy lay, ere he left the room.

The priest led the way into the room where he had interrogated Sandy respecting his knowledge of Mrs. Percy’s family, the latter coolly seating himself on one chair while he placed his hat upon another; he had scarcely done so, however, when he started up and coming to me, said—

"I'll better go now for Mrs. Percy's parcel ; if she wants me before I come back, you can tell her what took me away ; I'll be back as fast as my feet can carry me."

I was a little nonplussed what to say, knowing as I did that it was impossible for Sandy to remain within the precincts of a cloistered convent, and aware it would be difficult to convince the young man there was any power superior to the will of Lady Gordon's daughter, whose slightest behest he had been accustomed from his boyhood to see implicitly obeyed. The priest saw and comprehended my dilemma, and at once came to my aid.

"My friend," said he pulling out his watch and addressing Sandy as he examined it. "Neither you nor I can remain much longer here ; this house belongs to a community of ladies who devote themselves to the care of the sick, and no male person is permitted to remain in the house ; you may rest assured however that Mrs. Percy will have the greatest care and attention bestowed upon her while she is here ; as an evidence of her perfect confidence in these ladies she was brought to this house at her own request ; you had better go now to your home and bring the parcel you speak of to-morrow ; should Mrs. Percy ask for you in the meantime, she will be told when and why you have gone."

Sandy seemed far from satisfied with this arrangement, but the priest spoke as one having authority, which the lad had sense enough to see it was vain

for him to dispute, but as he was not to be allowed to remain in attendance on Mrs. Percy himself, he probably thought the next best thing he could do was to see that I should not fail in doing so; he came close up to me, saying in an under tone—

“I reckon, Miss St. Clare, ye’ll bide here and take care of Mrs. Percy till she’s able to go home, or else till Marion comes; I wish fae my heart she was here now.”

“I will stay here,” replied I, “as long as I will be allowed to do so, but you must remember that I am a stranger to Mrs. Percy; when you mentioned my name she did not seem to recollect ever having heard it; she has been here for several weeks, and is therefore quite accustomed to these ladies, who are kind enough to attend to the sick here; in her weak state it would injure her and perhaps prevent her ultimate recovery were a stranger such as I to take the place of one of these ladies, who have nursed her so tenderly since she came among them.”

I knew that Sandy must be imbued with the prejudice which his countrymen and women both have of hired attendance on the sick, and that he might have no scruples on this point, I added—

“The attendants here are no hired nurses, but ladies who give themselves to this work for the love of God, and to please Him, try to fulfil the perfect law of love to man; many of these nuns are ladies of fortune from Europe, whose rank is equal, if not superior, to Mrs. Percy’s own.”

In my anxiety to set Sandy's mind at ease with regard to Mrs. Percy and her surroundings, I had unwittingly overstept the mark; drawing himself up to his full height, (no mean one, very nearly approaching six feet) his eye flashing like an eagle's, while his forehead up to the roots of his hair was dyed crimson, he replied in anything but a pleased tone of voice—

"I daresay the ladies are very good an' rich too; the house is like that, although the walls are gay bare, and the boards covered but sparely," looking as he spoke from the walls to the painted floor, his mind doubtless the while taking a retrospective review of the richly carpeted apartments and pictured walls of Lady Gordon's house at Leith and the Castle at Rockgirtisle, "but for rank, an' gentle blood, there's few and far between that can come up to the Grand Gordons, an' for being better, there's none in broad Scotland fae Orkney to Berwick, MacCallum More himsel' no excepted."

I had unconsciously raised a storm, I was now fain to quell, although I was pleased to see that the priest the only one present who understood English, seemed rather amused than otherwise with this ebullition of Sandy's national pride, in thus standing up for the dignity of the Grand Gordons. I laid my hand gently on the lad's arm, saying as I did so—

"I do not mean by what I said to under value Mrs. Percy's rank of birth; I lived too long in Lady Gordon's house not to be perfectly aware that the

best blood in Scotland flows in her veins, but I wished to convince you that it is impossible for her to be cared better for under the circumstances than she is here; I will send a telegram by the cable to-morrow, which will bring Marion here with all possible speed; until then we must feel grateful to God, and praise Him for His goodness in placing Mrs. Percy under the protection of these good ladies; who knows what might be her fate were she under a roof less hedged in by power, both spiritual and secular, than this one is?"

Centuries ago, a wicked man high in the priesthood in old Jerusalem, prophesied unwittingly; with reverence be it spoken, even so did I, as I gave utterance to these last words; not many days from the one on which they were spoken, had Mrs. Percy been an inhabitant of walls less strongly hedged in by laws made expressly for themselves than was the convent of the Sisters of The Holy Cross, her wicked husband would have removed her to some wild fastness, where civilized man would never see her face, nor hear her voice again.

Sandy was pacified if not convinced, and took his leave, promising to be there early in the morning with the parcel given to him by Marion for Mrs. Percy. I easily understood why her brother, and not myself, was entrusted with the care of this parcel; she had with little difficulty imbued him with the same faith in Mrs. Percy's being yet alive as she herself held, whereas she knew well, although

I did not say so in words, I entertained little or no hope of such being the case, and would have probably looked upon such a parcel, as being a burden I was to carry with me to Canada, only to bring it myself back to Scotland again.

After Sandy had taken his departure, the priest said, addressing the prioress and myself jointly—

“This young man’s evidence is perfectly satisfactory as to the Lady upstairs being Lady Gordon of Rockgirtisle’s daughter; forty years ago I knew Lady Gordon well, and at times a glance of the eye or an expression of the mouth in Mrs. Percy, spoke or looked like the face I had known ere she herself was born. Although Mrs. Percy possesses beauty to a degree of excellence which belongs to her as a Gordon, the Seatons of which family her mother was a daughter, are distinguished more for their size of frame and strength of mind, than beauty of either face or form.”

“The moment I saw the young man remove his hat so quicky from his head, which he had tenaciously held to previous to his recognition of his mistress, I felt she was the one we all wished she should turn out to be; now it is of the first importance, that as quickly as possible, a brother or some other near relative be brought to her help.” Addressing me particularly, he added—“the cable telegram you mean to send had better be made as explicit on this point as may be. You may be certain, from the knowledge you have of her husband’s con-

duct, obtained both in Scotland and here, that as soon as he finds out she has left the Indian's hut and has come here, he will leave no stone unturned to obtain possession of her; it is very evident he has strong reason for desiring her seclusion from the world if not her departure from it, and it is a question whether the Superior will be entitled to refuse delivering her up to him at once; 'in the event of which taking place you may bid adieu to any hope of ever seeing her again.'

"But," urged I, in reply, "even in the event of Captain Percy finding out where she is, and bringing the Indian with him to testify to his being the man who brought her to Isle Jesus, and paid for her board while there, a thing very unlikely to happen quickly, as the Indian, by Monsieur Joinnette's account, has gone to some far off hunting ground, from whence he does not expect to return until next spring, by which time I hope Mrs. Percy will be safe in Scotland; but, say that he came, supported thus by the Indian, is the Superior not entitled to refuse him possession of his first wife on the plea that he has a second living with him in Montreal?"

"That involves a very difficult question," was the priest's reply, given with a gravity of expression, which spoke more strongly than even his words. "In the first place, before the Lady Superior could attempt to deny him possession of Mrs. Percy, on the plea of his being a bigamist, she must establish this as the truth. From the fact of your being unable to trace him the day after his arrival here, it is

evident he is living in Montreal under an assumed name, so is the woman who calls herself his wife ; if he wills it so, it will involve a long law process to prove that a woman known by a certain name is the wife of a man bearing another. There is yet another view of the case,—she was sent here by the Curé of St. Martin's as the sister of a man named Smith ; from the second day she entered the hospital until aroused by the sight of our friend Sandy Mitchell, she was constantly in a state of half stupor, scarcely ever replying to a question, and only uttering incoherent words ; this lethargy may set in again at any moment, and then it is a question of law whether she can be detained or not, placing the Superior in a most invidious position. An unscrupulous man, such as Captain Percy is described to be, has only to go to the next magistrate, declaring that his sister, who is a woman of large wealth, has been decoyed into the convent of the Holy Cross, and that the covetous nuns who desire to obtain possession of her money, refuse to give her up ! In less than an hour, a *posse* of policemen will force an entrance into the convent, Smith will have his sister handed over to him, whether for good or evil the multitude care not, so that what the mob call the liberty of the subject is protected."

"The only way to frustrate his plans for the recovery of Mrs. Percy, is to have some of her friends here as quickly as possible ; meantime, to delay his proceedings I shall write to St. Martin's,

and thereby make it, for a time at least, an enigma for him to solve where his wife has gone to."

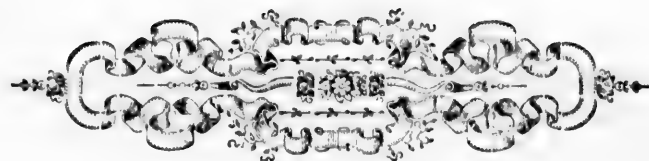
The prioress and Father Paul (such was the priest's name) bade me a cordial goodbye, the latter bidding me God-speed, and the former by the interest she exhibited in Mrs. Percy's cause, taking me quite by surprise. I could never have fancied that the cold unimpressible nun of the morning, would under any circumstances have thawed out into the kind benevolent woman I found her to be; although I must say, in all my intercourse, I found she kept the interest of the community strictly in view, giving it a prominence and place above all else; perhaps this is human nature, perhaps she was bound to this line of conduct by her convent vow. In bidding me goodbye, she said—

"Come every day to see Mrs. Percy if you like. and always ask for me; it will save you some trouble."



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CHAPTER XVII.

WHEN leaving the convent I hailed the first cabman I saw, desiring him to take me to Mrs. Dunbar's; I had much need of repose; my long journey from Isle Jesus in the morning, and the excitement through which I had passed during the succeeding hours of this most eventful day, made me long for the repose of my own room, which I knew would now be ready for my reception; it was not until I had reached my sanctum, and thrown myself into a large easy chair, which kind Mrs. Dunbar had promised to provide so as to be a little comfort to me after my illness, that I began to think of my letters which must have come the previous day, that having been the day of the British mail; looking towards the top of the bureau, I espied them there, in their accustomed place, where Jenny the servant girl always laid them in my absence, as soon as she received them from the Post-man.

I was so thoroughly worn out that I remained some minutes looking at my treasures in the distance, ere I could summon courage to rise from my reclining position in the easy chair, to possess myself of them; when I did so, to my surprise there were

only two instead of the usual number of four ; as I laid hold of them, my heart fluttered with fear and the thought of Grandpapa's death occurring during my absence, an idea, which in those days of loneliness often suggested itself to my mind, made my heart feel sick with apprehension, and I sank on a seat close to the bureau, before I had strength to look on the address. Grandpapa was alive and well, two weeks ago ; there was the dear old shaky hand, and I kissed it with a feeling very unlike my undemonstrative nature ; the other was from Ella, what could have become of my other two ? something serious must have occurred, or Mr. Morton and Marion would never have both neglected to write by the same post, and Mr. Morton's letter which I expected was to bring me orders, or at least advice how I was to proceed in my search ; what could he mean by not writing to me ?

This was the first British weekly mail which had arrived since my coming to Canada without bringing me a letter from Mr. Morton, and this of all others was the one I had most longed to receive ; True, had it arrived, its orders or advice would now be futile, but this did not lessen the anxiety I felt from its non-arrival, and I rang my chamber bell in hopes Jenny could throw some light on the missing letter.

"Jenny," said I, as the girl made her appearance, "How many letters did the Post-man give you for me yesterday ?"

"I think he gave me four, Ma'am" replied she, coloring as she spoke, "and I put them all down on the bureau as usual, but this morning, when I came to dust the room I only found two, and I told the mistress in the minute I missed them; she says she is sure I made a mistake, and miscounted the letters; perhaps I did, but I think I got four, and I know I put all I got there, for I brought them all straight up from the door, and just laid them down in the place I always do."

"Perhaps they have fallen over the back of the bureau, Jenny," suggested I; "we will move it and look."

"I will move it if you like, Ma'am" replied the girl. "But my mistress and me moved everything in the morning after I missed them, we moved the very bed, and there is not a scrap of paper as big as my little finger in the whole room."

Notwithstanding this, I had first the bureau, and afterwards everything in the room moved, but no letters were to be seen. I then examined the girl a second time.

"Jenny, what makes you think you got four letters?"

"I'm sure I got four, Ma'am," said Jenny in her simple earnest way, "because I paid eight cents for them; you know they are always two cents a letter when the post-man brings them, and I am quite sure I paid eight cents out of my own money I had in my pocket."

A loud rap at the door. "There is the post-man," exclaimed Jenny, and away she ran, returning however in a second or two almost breathless.

"Yes, Ma'am, the post-man says there was four, all British letters."

Close at Jenny's back came Mrs. Dunbar.

"I'm very sorry for your letters, Miss St. Clare," said she, looking indeed more grieved than I thought the letters were worth. "But the only way in which I can account for their loss, is by thinking that Mr. Danville, the gentleman who occupied your room last night, has in a mistake put them into his valise; he told me when he came, that he expected a number of letters by the evening mail, and would probably sit up until twelve o'clock writing, and requested particularly that he would not be disturbed, and perhaps when his letters were finished, he put them on the bureau, and when lifting his own took two of yours with them, but if it is so, he is sure to send them back by post as soon as he discovers them. He is too much of a gentleman to keep them an hour in his possession after he has found they are not his own."

I begged of her not to annoy herself any more about them; if her supposition was correct, and Mr. Danville should send them back, it would be satisfactory to her, and I would be pleased to have my letters; if not, I would receive others from the same persons who had written these last letters, next week, and so it mattered very little.

Alas ! poor human nature, how little we know of what concerns us most ; had those letters not fallen into other hands than my own, in all probability my life-woe would have been spared me.

Next morning, as soon as I fancied the bank would be open, I went to draw money, that I might pay for the cablegram, and also to supply my own purse, which by giving the forty dollars to the prioress, was now at a low ebb.

On entering the bank I presented an order signed by myself, and cut from a bank book given me by the gentleman from whom I received the first money I drew from the sum sent to my credit, when I first came to Canada.

To my surprise, instead of at once receiving the money as usual, the young man I addressed requested me to step into an adjoining apartment, on doing which I found myself in presence of the cashier ; on hearing my name pronounced by the gentleman who accompanied me, the cashier looked up from the desk at which he was writing, without moving his body, and stared me rudely in the face for several seconds, and then speaking in a tone of voice which accorded well with the expression of his countenance, said—

“ We have had orders from Mr. Robert Morton not to honor any drafts of yours for the future.”

“ Orders from Mr. Morton not to honor my draft ? impossible !” said I, speaking confidently, and looking him full in the face as I spoke.

“ Nevertheless he has done so ; are you not aware

that he was in town yesterday and called at your boarding-house the previous evening?" As he spoke, the cashier lifted himself up from his desk, and assumed a sterner expression than before.

"No," replied I. "I was not aware of his being in Canada until this moment, neither am I sure of the fact now. But in any case, Mr. Morton could not prevent my drawing the money, which was only transmitted through him as the legal adviser of the lady who sent me here."

"We have nothing to do with the question of who is the owner of the money," replied the cashier, standing up as he spoke, evidently expecting by so doing he would send me away without the trouble of bidding me go. "Mr. Robert Morton is the one who consigned the money to us, and he, in person, gave us orders to pay no more of it away to you; you ought to be very well pleased at getting so easily off." As he spoke he moved some of the papers lying at one side of his desk, as if searching for something, which having found, he tossed towards me adding: "You know Mr. Robert Morton's writing, I presume."

I lifted the card, as it fell on the table in front of where I stood, a gentleman's visiting card, on which was written in Mr. Morton's hand, "Robert Morton, W. S." and in the left corner in small characters, "*From Edinburgh.*" A mist swam before my eyes as I looked. What could be the meaning of this? Yet a second more, part of it seemed clear to me, Mr.

Morton himself could explain the rest, and looking up from the card which I still held in my hand, I asked the cashier, who was now busily engaged with the papers on his desk, as he had been when I entered—

“Will you tell me at what hour Mr. Morton was here yesterday, and also if he left his address in Montreal with you?”

Mr. Goldenow answered in a short petulant accent, without raising his head, or arresting the motion of his pen for an instant—

“Between two and three o’clock,—was at the St. Lawrence,—intended to leave by the night train for New York.”—

These words were spoken in three sentences with a short pause between each. I knew there was nothing more to be learned here, and turning round, left the Bank with a perplexed and troubled mind, which a few minutes previously I had entered full of hope and confidence.

On finding myself in the street, I took my way in the direction of the St. Lawrence Hotel; it might be possible Mr. Morton was still there. On reaching the Hotel I received exactly the same answer, and from the same person, as had been given me nearly four months previous when making inquiries for Captain Percy.

Looking carefully over the name book and finding that neither yesterday nor the day previous had

there been any such person as Mr. Robert Morton at the house, the young man said, looking in my face without rudeness, yet with a certain scrutinizing air, which was anything but agreeable—

“I think you are the lady who some months ago came after Captain something or another whom you could’nt find either; you’re not lucky with your friends.”

I took no notice of his familiarity, but saying that it was possible Mr. Morton might have been in the house without his name being put in the book, begged of him to ask some of the waiters if they had seen any baggage bearing his name.

“No, no,” replied he, in a careless tone, “he’s not here, nor has he been, his baggage or himself either, he’s something of the same style as Captain Landless, footless and handless, that you was after in the spring,” and turning from me while he spoke, left me pleasantly situated—the centre of a grinning lot of boot-blacks and waiters.

I now made the best of my way to Doctor Balfour’s, that I might consult with him what I was to do in this emergency, and if possible get him to lend me money to pay the cablegram, which it was so necessary should be sent at once; my evil genius seemed to have been following me all day, and a presentiment that he still tracked my footsteps was on me, as I rang the bell at the Reverend Doctor’s door.

“Is Doctor Balfour in?”

“No, Ma’am.”

"Will he be in at dinner time?" asked I, looking at my watch. It was now nearly noon, and if the answer was in the affirmative I resolved to wait for him; I knew the family dined at twelve.

"No, Ma'am, he wont be in at dinner time, he's gone from home."

"Ask Mrs. Balfour if I can see her?"

"Mrs. Balfour has gone with the doctor."

It was a strange girl who opened the door and answered my questions; Lizzy, the Irish girl, whose duty I knew it was to wait upon the door had been for some time in Doctor Balfour's service, and I doubted not could give me better information as to when I was likely to see him than this girl, who, I knew, was a stranger, and I asked if she would bring Lizzy to speak to me.

"Lizzy has gone home sick a week ago," replied the girl, "and I am in her place; it was me that opened the door to you yesterday."

"Do you know when the doctor will be back again?"

"No, Ma'am, I dont, but I'll ask the nurse; perhaps she can tell you."

Away she went, leaving me standing at the door where this colloquy had taken place; in a second or two, the nurse, a respectable looking middle aged woman, made her appearance, carrying a little fat image of the doctor in her arms; on seeing who I was, she at once shewed me into the parlor, requesting me to be seated.

"Bridget says you wish to know when the doctor will be home, Ma'am," she began, as soon as I had seated myself. "I cannot tell you, nor does he know himself; Mrs. Balfour's mother is very ill indeed, the doctor had a telegram last night, and this morning they were off by the first train; The doctor got the promise of another minister to fill the pulpit next Sunday before he went, and if Mrs. Warner is not better or worse, he'll take some further means to put another minister in his place for the Sunday after."

This was doubtless very interesting to the nurse, but not to me; intensely stretched as my mind was in thinking of what concerned me more nearly, it occurred to me that perhaps the nurse might know if Doctor Balfour had seen Mr. Morton if he really was in Montreal; I felt sure in default of seeing me he would go to Doctor Balfour, as I had scarcely written a letter since my arrival, without relating some little kindness or attention received from him; Mr. Goldenow had said Mr. Morton called at my boarding-house the day before yesterday; that day was the last I spent in St. Martin's; not finding me, it was more than likely he would have gone to see Doctor Balfour on the morrow, and I inquired of the nurse if she was aware of a Scottish gentleman having visited her master the previous day, after I left the house.

"Yes, Ma'am, there was a gentleman from Edinburgh here yesterday; the doctor went to the door with him, and after his return I heard him tell

Mrs. Balfour that he was sorry he could not ask him to tea, and send for you to meet him, but the gentleman said that he preferred seeing you at your own boarding place, where he would go to pass the evening with you."

Here was another revelation regarding Mr. Morton quite as incomprehensible to me as Mr. Goldenow's; he was aware of my return to town; Doctor Balfour must have told him of the almost certainty that Mrs. Percy was found; what could he mean by not coming to see me last night as he told Doctor Balfour he intended to do, and that he did not, I was certain, I was too tired to leave my own room, far less the house, during the whole evening.

I left Doctor Balfour's house more perplexed than when I entered it,—and what was worse, instead of feeling as I usually did when an emergency occurred, a determination to rise up and help myself, the only sure way to overcome any difficulty,—I felt helpless and dispirited, looking this way and that for some one to stretch out a strong arm, and lift me out of this Slough of Despond, and set me on the firm dry road again.

I walked on for some distance, uncertain which way to take or how to act; if I went to the Convent of The Holy Cross, where yesterday I had promised to be long ere noon, probably one of the first questions which would be asked me, would be, 'if my cable telegram had been sent off?' how my negative answer would make them stare, and how was I to account for this seeming negligence?—by

telling a story that made my cheek burn to pain, and my heart flutter uneasily each time I thought of it?—and which had already thrown a slur upon my character, the stain of which I knew not how to remove. Oh! it was too terrible even to allow my own thoughts to dwell upon; how could I with my own lips retail the scandal to another?—I was walking through deep mire which had soiled all my garments, and there was no fuller's soap wherewith to whiten them;—my whole heart was sick—my whole head sore—and there was no balm in Gilead, no physician there.

I had not yet learned to “cease from man,” and yet, even at that very time, “The Lord God Merciful and Gracious” had sent His Angel to help me.

I went along purposeless, looking from side to side, and wondering if there was not some deep open door-way where I might sit down and rest in the cool darkness, and then the Angel of the covenant came to me, and said, “What thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might. Be not faithless, but believe.”

And my heart answered, “Even so, Lord; in Thy strength I will do Thy will.” Turning round, I retraced my steps in the direction of the Convent of The Holy Cross; as I neared the gate, I saw Samy Mitchell, dressed in what he called his Sabbath clothes, walking leisurely before, his hands thrust in his pockets and his head bent to the ground, as if he was counting each step he took.

"Sandy," said I, speaking loud enough to attract his attention, and make him turn round, "You seem to have more leisure to-day than you had yesterday."

He turned round, and touching his hat, said, "It's all leisure to-day, mem; all the work I've done since five o'clock in the morning is to saw a little wood for the ladies in there."

"How is that? Sandy," inquired I, rather anxiously; the lad's former habits making me fear a life of idleness for him now; "I hope you have not left your place."

"Well, mem," replied he, "that question is no easy answered with yes or no; I have left it and I have not."

"If you wish me to understand you, you'll have to explain your meaning more clearly," said I.

"Well, mem, the long and the short o't is this, that when I went hame last night, I told the gudeman that he would need to look out for anither han', at ane o' Lady Gordon's family was here, an' needed my service for a while; I cannot say he was very well pleased, an' he said a good deal about raising my wage if I would bide, but I telled him it was no use; the money wasna coined yet that could pay me for workin' to him or any other stranger when ane o' the family wanted me, but I said I did not think it would be long till the one I was going to serve would go to Scotland again, and then if he liked I would come back to him rather than go to anither; so we parted good friends, and I promised to go back to see them

when I had an hour to mysel' an' to go back to bide wi' them all Winter when my time was out here."

"But, Sandy," said I, in dismay at the position the lad had placed himself in, "you cannot live in the Convent; you surely ought to have understood that, by what the clergyman who spoke to you last night, said."

"Oh! I ken all that well enough," replied he, "An' so afore I went hame last night, I sought out a lodgin to mysel, wi' a very civil woman that bides in that wooden house ower bye," pointing as he spoke to a neat looking white cottage, not a hundred yards off. "An she's no charging me ower dear, either, considering the rents they pay here; I'm only goin' to give her two dollars and a half for board and lodging, an auld Mrs. Campbell wouldna hear to my taking my kist out o' her house, and saving your presence, she's goin' to wash my shirts and mend my stockings."

"But, Sandy, where are you to get money to pay even that? you must have sent nearly the whole of your earnings home, from what you yourself told me."

"No, I did not do that, or anything like it; I paid my father for the money he paid out and for the money as he sent to the bank, although that's no drawn out, I never needed a bawbee o't; so that's afore me, and mair than that forbye, an' I couldna make a better use o't than pitten it out the way I'm doin'."

"Perhaps not," replied I, "if you were able to see Mrs. Percy, or even get into the Convent; have you thought about that?"

"Well, I canna say I thought much about it; it was all settled very easy in the morning. I'm biding in the convent now, an' I saw Mrs. Percy the day, and got my commands from her." As the lad spoke, his face assumed first an air of importance, and then as he uttered the last sentence, a sad uneasy look replaced the other, his words and manner both exciting my curiosity.

"Tell me how you managed that."

"I didna manage it at all; it was managed for me. When I came here in the morning wi' Mrs. Percy's parcel, between five and six, I met the gentleman in the black gown we saw yesterday, a mile above the town, and he commenced speaking to me, and asked me where I was going; so I let him see the bundle I had for Mrs. Percy, and told him about the lodgings I had gotten, and that I was goin' to bide there for a while just to be about hand when Mrs. Percy wanted me for anything; so when we came to the gate he rang the bell, an' before ye could say Jack Robison it was opened, jest as there was somebody waitin' at the back o'the door till he rang, and he took me in along wi' him, and said he was goin' to keep service in the chapel an' I could come if I liked; so in I went, an' its a real bonny place, an' a little lamp burning no far from the pulpit, though it was broad daylight, an' it was as full of nuns in their black gowns and white caps as ever it could hold, all on their knees praying before we went in, though ye couldn't hear a word they said; he signed to me

to take a seat out bye from the rest, and he prayed awhile, an' I'm thinking sang very quiet-like some o'the psalms, or maybe it was hymns, but I couldna make head or tail of what he said, so I just took out my catechism that always lies in the pocket of my Sabbath coat, and I got "Effectual Calling," a thing I never could do all my life before."

"He put on a white robe in a little side room before he began, so I waited after the nuns went all out, marchin' two an two like sodgers, till he put on his every day clothes, and came out, and then I followed him, and he told me that if I liked to help the old gardener in the garden, and whiles cut some wood, I could bide there till Mrs. Percy was better and able to go away, and the nuns would pay me for my work what they thought it was worth when I was going away; I was real glad, so it was all settled in a minute, the priest told me I was to go out to my dinner with the old man at twelve o'clock and come back before one, so I'm just waiting for the old man to go in again to my work."

"I'm thinking they've lost some o' their han's, for yon potterin about old body of a man that they have, could never keep the garden in the order its in; I would do more work in a day than he would do in a week."

"You said you saw Mrs. Percy, how is she to-day?"

"Oh! deed, mem, she's very poorly," replied he, looking very grave as he spoke.

"You said she wanted you to do something, what was it?"

"Well, mem, it wont give you much pleasure to hear that," said he, and as he spoke, his forehead flushed red, with a painful expression of sadness round his compressed mouth. "She just said quiet like as gin she wad like to hide it fae the folk roun about, 'go out to the needle rock, Sandy, and bring me some dulse.'"

The poor lad heaved a deep sigh as he concluded the sentence he had spoken almost in a whisper.

"Where is the needle rock, Sandy?" inquired I, "or is it any where? is there such a place?"

"Oh! aye, to be sure there is," said the lad, looking at me in surprise, as I asked the question. "The needle rock is yon big rock with a hole through the top o't out a bit from the shore at Rockgirtisle Castle. Many a day I've gathered dulse about its foot when the tide was back, an many a day she sent me for them when I was a laddie, wading out among the rocks wi my bare feet an' my trousers rolled up, I wish that she was there the day, she would grow sooner well there, than up in yon big room wi' so many sick folk roun' about her."

Sandy Mitchell's conclusion was a right one, and his words fell on my heart as if they had been edged with a sharp steel point, while I thought how long it would be, ere those who should take her home, or at least remove her from that crowded room, with its sick beds, could come to her assistance.

Almost as Sandy ceased speaking, the old gardener made his appearance, and in a few minutes we were

all three within the precincts of the court yard, with its broad squares of closely shaven grass, through which a second time the white clover was putting forth its fragrant blossoms and shamrock-shaped velvety leaves. I asked for the prioress, as she had desired me to do, and in a few minutes I was joined by her in the reception room.

"I fear," said she on entering. "your friend is somewhat worse to-day; perhaps the excitement of yesterday was too much for her; I will send Sister St. Nativity to speak with you. Our Mother General visits us this afternoon, and I have a world of preparation to make before her arrival."

She was gone from the room as the sound of her words yet lingered in my ears, but I had not long to wait for Sister St. Nativity, who reiterated what the prioress had said with regard to Mrs. Percy being worse, at same time adding—

"I do not know that she is any worse than she was yesterday morning, but she was so collected, and moved herself so strongly when she was speaking to the young man, that I felt disappointed when I found she had fallen into the old lethargic state this morning; however between nine and ten o'clock she seemed better, and asked for the young man by his name; I had him brought up to her, and she said something to him which he evidently understood and indeed answered."

I asked if I might see her? "You may," replied the nun, "but you must just stand as you did

yesterday so as not to be seen ; she must be kept as quiet as possible ; if my advice had been taken, she would not have been subjected to the excitement of yesterday, but the doctor who was here while you were gone, thought it might rouse her from her stupor and tend to her recovery ; however, you see how it has turned out."

I fancied the nun talked as if she felt a degree of satisfaction in her own prognostics being fulfilled ; human nature is the same in every phase of life, and I suppose nuns have their weaknesses as well as our hired nurses at home, any one of whom, I know would be highly offended should her skill in deciding what was the best for her patient be doubted.

I followed the nun upstairs and stood looking on Mrs. Percy's pale face at least ten minutes ; in all that time she scarcely moved a muscle. Sister St. Nativity asked her if she would have a drink, she moved the hand which lay outside the quilt a little backward to indicate she would not, neither attempting to open her eyelids nor her lips ; looking at the pale lips and white face from which every trace of blood seemed to have gone, lying without motion or apparent breath, I could not hide from myself the truth so forced upon me, that no cable could ever bring those who loved her soon enough from distant Europe to close her dying eyes.

Descending from the dormitory, I expressed my thoughts in words to the nun ; she shook her head slowly in answer, whether deprecatingly or otherwise I was at a loss to understand.

I went home sad and dispirited, ready to exclaim "all these things are against me." Robert Morton had been among the first to counsel me to the performance of the pledge I had given to Lady Gordon, yet now what does he do? without any warning he comes out to Montreal, and by his actions cripples me in the work I was sent to do, and by his words, causes me to be looked on with suspicion by at least one of the few I had any intercourse with.

Mrs. Dunbar and her boarders were at dinner when I returned to what I called my home. I could not have eaten had the dinner consisted of nectar instead of the roast mutton to-day and boiled mutton to-morrow, on which the changes were always rung at Mrs. Dunbar's; I waited in my own room until dinner was over, and the boarders gone to their various employments, and then going to the dining room where I was sure to find my landlady, reposing as was her wont, on the hair cloth sofa, after the toils of the day, I at once entered on my subject; well may I call it so, I had thought of nothing else since first I heard of it.

"Mrs. Dunbar, can you tell me if a gentleman from Scotland called for me the day before yesterday or even yesterday?" this in an anxious voice.

"No, indeed; I never heard of any one calling for you, but we'll ring for Jenny and see."

Suiting the action to the word, she was already engaged in summoning her factotum.

"Jenny, did a gentleman call for Miss St. Clare, a

gentleman from Scotland, yesterday or the day before?"

"No Mem, there was no gentleman or lady either called for Miss St Clare, that I know of, unless yourself or one of the young ladies opened the door."

"Good gracious! Jenny," exclaimed Mrs. Dunbar, starting up from her recumbent position, "What put's such nonsense as that in your head? didn't I tell you the first day you entered the house, that answering the door was a thing would never be done for you? I might as well keep a boarding house at once, as go and answer the door, or allow my children do it; you know well enough its clean against all rules in this house; of course I may take the bread from the baker or the milk from the milk-man on a washing day, but as for *me* answering the door to a gentleman's rap, I would just as soon put a white printed paper in the window, with "Private Boarding" on it; no, no, its out of the question altogether."

The lady's indignation was roused to a pitch I had never seen it, although I knew she was very touchy on what she considered points of etiquette, that I, in my ignorance looked upon as being of no consequence whatever. Jenny saw the error she had committed, and repeated once or twice in a half indignant tone—

"No, Mem, *you* never go to the door, to be sure you dont; it's not your place; what for would you go to the door? it's not your place, didn't you give me a nice black apron to put on when I went to the door?"

"Of course I did, Jenny," said her mistress, a good deal mollified by the words and manner of the girl. "And I paid two shillings the yard for it, although they were selling off cheap at Norfolk and Standish's when I bought it."

The little excitement had now passed, and glad to be able to make myself heard again, I said—

"But, Jenny, perhaps you may have forgotten, because you know I was not at home the day before yesterday; I had not returned from Isle Jesus."

"I know very well you wasn't at home, but it's not so long ago, I couldn't forget so soon." The girl spoke as if she was a little nettled at my persistency, and seeing this, I said, looking and speaking as conciliatory as possible—

"That is true, Jenny; it is only so to speak a few hours, but still we often forget by evening what we do in the morning, and I was told to-day at the Scottish Mining Company's Bank, by Mr Goldenow, the cashier, that a gentleman from Edinburgh, in Scotland, told him he called here when I was out and I wished to ask you how he looked? if he was a fair man or dark?"

"He was neither fair nor dark for me, for I never saw him," said the girl, her temper fairly roused by so much questioning on a matter which must have appeared to her of so little consequence; "and for that, I've never seen anybody come after you, gentle or simple, since ever you first entered the house."

The girl spoke only the simple truth, but her

words grated harshly on my ear, and gave me a choking sensation; I had never realized until the fact was pointed out to me by this simple girl, that in all this great city, with its one hundred and thirty thousand inhabitants, I was so solitary, that I had no right to expect a visit from any one of them.

The lesson thus set me has done me good, in all my after life; I have never neglected an opportunity to entertain strangers, and a most blessed exercise has it been for my own soul.





CHAPTER XVIII.

I NOW sought my own room, and employed myself in writing to Scotland, to undo if possible the evil Mr. Morton had done. I wrote to Grandpapa, requesting him to draw one hundred pounds of Lady Gordon's legacy, (which I had transmitted to him to be placed in the Bank of Scotland, that the interest of it might accumulate, and when I returned home it would help to make our housekeeping on a little more liberal scale), and send it to me with all possible speed, through the Bank of Montreal, warning him to carefully avoid sending it through the Scottish Mining Company's Bank.

Having done this I breathed more freely ; I now felt secure that if the Merciful Lord were pleased to send health and life to the poor afflicted one now lying in the Hospital of the Holy Cross, and that Captain Percy could be kept in ignorance of her whereabouts, or held at bay until wind and tide brought this money "from Scotland o'er the sea," I would have sufficient funds to bring her home, should there arrive never a penny more from Edinburgh.

I then sat down to write to Marion, although I never wrote a letter which seemed to be such a

task ; since the information obtained in the morning, I had become of Mrs. Dunbar's opinion that Jenny had miscounted the letters given her by the Postman. On his daily visits to the house, that functionary generally spent a few minutes in pleasant badinage with Jenny, while she, on her part, had always a blithe look on her pretty face, while hurrying upstairs from her basement kitchen to answer the imperative and well known rap of the black-eyed postman ; during the whole summer every British Mail having brought me four letters, was it any wonder, with their preconceived ideas, that in the midst of their agreeable chat, both Jenny and the postman should have come to the same conclusion, namely, that the usual number of British letters had arrived. No, I felt convinced, the more strongly the more I thought the subject over, that whatever motive had prompted Mr. Morton to come to Montreal, and put a stop to my drawing the money sent to Canada expressly for my use, that motive had also prevented Marion from writing her usual weekly letter.

Were it not that I had such good news to tell, I would not have written to Marion until the first brush of uneasy feeling Mr. Morton's conduct had given rise to, had passed away ; as it was, I would have counted it sin to have withheld from her relatives one hour, the good news, that Margaret Gordon, the loved of all, whom they had mourned so long as an inhabitant of the grave, was yet alive, and with

God's help, might yet go to live among them in her Scottish home.

I wrote two letters, one to Marion and one to Mr. Seaton of Thurlow, couched nearly in the same terms; to both I gave a full description of the finding of Mrs. Percy and her present state; of my having paid over forty dollars to the Prioress to prevent her being considered for one hour in the light of a pauper, and having stated every particular, down to the request she had made of Sandy Mitchell in the morning, to bring her some dulse, and of his having taken up his abode in a cottage near the Convent, that he might be near and serve her, I lastly told of Mr. Morton's visit to Montreal and its consequences, finishing my letter by repeating every word which the priest had said of the necessity there was for removing Mrs. Percy as quickly as possible from the convent, and that no one but a relative, could by law do this in her present state; that any day her husband might come to claim her.

On finishing my letters, I quickly obeyed the summons sent me to appear at the tea-table, my appetite having been sharpened by my long fast.

As I seated myself, I observed yet another boarder had been added to the household, in the person of a fellow clerk of the tall chemist, who also being a wit, made quite an agreeable addition, their witticisms always taking the pleasant side.

If one might judge by the study the tall chemist Mr. Clement made of Miss Medora's looks during the

repast, and the attentions he paid her, he was now deep in love with that young lady, and I saw that both he and his friend had a standing joke, in common with Miss Medora, that seemed to afford them infinite amusement, and which the other members of the family evidently could neither understand nor share; it was in practice certainly simple enough and yet it had been persisted in for full three weeks, without any success being attained in attempting to solve it.

The tall chemist, or his friend Mr Joiner, would, with mock serious face, ask one another or Miss Medora: "Will you have the goodness to tell me what is the name of the lady in black?"

This question was sure to be succeeded by shouts of laughter from the young men, even the generally quiet Miss Medora being obliged to have recourse to her handkerchief.

On the evening referred to, the question causing so much amusement, was asked no less than three times, a strong emphasis being always placed on the second word "*you*," occasioning the mirth at last to become "fast and furious," exciting the anger of the good lady at the head of the table to such a degree, that at last she threatened to send Miss Medora from the table, if it was not discontinued.

Shortly after this admonition, the chemist rose from table, excusing himself by saying that his "time was up," and in passing Miss Medora's chair, took an

opportunity of asking in a low tone, so as only to be heard by herself and me, who sat next her—

“Will *you* have the goodness to tell me the name of the lady in black?”

Poor Miss Medora's face became almost purple, in vain efforts to suppress laughter which would not be suppressed, while her Mamma half rose from her seat, tea-pot in hand, as if she had some intention of throwing it at the head of the tall figure disappearing in the door-way.

After tea, I asked Miss Sophy to accompany me to the Post Office, as on my return, the evenings were now so short, it would be quite dark, and the young lady having signified her willingness to do so, I sought my own room, that I might put on my bonnet and shawl, and wait until she had arrayed herself in her most killing costume, an operation, which I knew from experience, was necessary every time she visited Great St. James street.

I had scarcely completed my out door toilet, when Mrs Dunbar entered my room, at once seating herself as if preparing for a long chat.

“I just came up to help to pass the time till Sophy gets ready,” began the good lady. “She has a little bit lace to sew on the cuffs of her purple dress, so that 'll take a minute or two, and I thought in the meantime I would kill two birds with one stone, see if Jenny has made your room all right and tight for the night, and help to keep you from being lonesome.”

I thanked the lady for her thoughtfulness, and seated myself with my tatting shuttle in expectation of soon hearing what really brought her to my room.

"I suppose one of your letters is to the gentleman you thought would have called upon you yesterday," was the first essay in breaking the ice.

"No," said I, "I do not know his address."

"Indeed, then, it's just as well you dont," was the response, with a little indignant toss of the head. "I would be very sorry to look over my shoulder at him; there's no use running after lads in Canada; they're too plenty."

I was considering whether it was worth while taking the trouble to undeceive her in the idea she had formed of the visitor I had been so disappointed in not seeing, being what she termed a *lad* of mine, when she interrupted my cogitations by again resuming the thread of her discourse.

"No, no, there's no use crying over spilt milk; you'll get a better, not throwing a snowball at him who I know nothing about, as I never saw him, nor ever heard of him till this forenoon, but I can as easy see through a millstone as a miller, and any man that could say to another he had been to see a young lady that he never came near, is not worth three skips of a grasshopper, and that's the plain truth."

My dilemma was even greater now than at the conclusion of her first observation, and hopeless of my ability to convince her she was in error, I took

refuge in silence, as most people of undemonstrative natures would have done in like circumstances. Encouraged by my silence, which probably was construed into acquiescence, she continued—

“No, as I said before, there’s no need for running after lads here; ye’ll get two when you’re only wanting one, and you couldn’t be in a better place than this very house for a chance of getting acquainted with marriageable gentlemen; there’s Medora that’s engaged to Mr. Clement, and to be married at the New Year, the only son of a rich father, has two beautiful farms, and neither chick nor child but him, and all delighted with Medora. Mrs. Clement came in and stayed two days last week with us, and bought as much clothes out of Hewit and Simpson’s as would almost frighten you, and would take no denial, but have both the girls to go out with Mr. Clement when he gets his holidays; his father’s going to put him into a store of his own in the Spring, and he’s to furnish these two rooms,” passing her hand before where she sat as if to indicate the rooms in front of the house, “as a parlor and bed-room for the young people until they take up house, so I think her bread is baked at any rate.”

She must have observed that my face expressed less surprise than consternation, which I really felt at the idea of the woman allowing her child to be engaged on such short notice to a man I supposed they had not previously known, and she quickly added—

"Of course Mr. Clement has been sparking Medora for more than two years, but it never seemed like to come to anything, and indeed just before he came to ask me to let him board in the house, I was thinking to tell him to pass his Sunday evenings somewhere else, for I knew he was keeping back another that was very fond of Medora, but not such a good match as Mr. Clement, so it was just as well I didn't do it. "Them that bides well betides well." There's no use being too rash, ye always knock your head when ye jump in the dark; and it shewed his sense to do as he has done; he told me when he came to ask my consent that he had got better insight to Medora's character in the few weeks he was sleeping and rising in the same house with her, than he had done in all the two years before; and there's another thing that between you and me I think hurried it on,—after he came to the house he couldn't but see that Mr. Mark Redtape was looking very sweet upon Medora (Mr. Mark Redtape was the elder of the brother lawyers) so naturally he didn't like that."

She now looked up to receive my congratulations, which I gave very heartily, expressing my hopes that Miss Dunbar would soon follow in her sister's wake.

"That she will," was the mother's reply, with a smiling nod of the head two or three times repeated. "But if she didn't, Sophy has a pretty face and plenty of time to wait: it's not about Sophy I was

going to speak, but about yourself; why dont you set your cap at some of the gentlemen? there's Mr. Mark Redtape, a first rate lawyer, doing well—they say he'll be one of the big bugs some day, and that not very far off, and his clients all of the gentle sort; he'll take none of your riff raff low cases, where you have to put your conscience in your pocket, and try to make out a rogue to be an honest man."

"I do not think," replied I, "there would any good result from my setting my cap for Mr. Redtape; the predilection he shewed in favour of your pretty daughter is evidence of his love of beauty; rest assured my homely face would have no chance with him, besides you know I told you more than once, I have no wish to make a home for myself in Canada, so I had better lay aside all matrimonial speculations until I see bonny Scotland again."

"Well," said the good lady, with a cheery look, as if a bright thought had just struck her, "I've two strings to my bow for you, there's Mr. Denham, once he'll get a living you couldn't have a better, and deed it would be a feather in your cap to take him from all the young ladies that's making book-marks and slippers to him without end; there's three pair of worsted slippers lying in his drawer, and he hadn't one of them when he came here, but just the black leather pair that he wears at breakfast, and for book-marks, there's not a week passes without one or two new ones in his room bible, and you know very well how old and young flock to hear him preach, the

church is sure to be full to the door that he preaches in, every one says he would get a call to our church if anything happened to the doctor, deed he's just the very man, going back to Scotland too as well as yourself. Oh!" continued she, with a sly smile, and a little slow nod, "I've hit the right nail on the head at last; you're wiser than I thought you was; if I wasn't half blind I might have seen there was something in the wind when he went to the expense of a carriage from a livery stable to take you to St. Martin's, although that was an unfortunate affair, but it wasn't his fault, and bringing you home from church every dark Sunday night, and hadn't you him all to yourself coming across the ocean; its the old story yet, 'the still sow drinks up the draf';—your face betrays your secret, but its safe enough with me, and may be I'll put in a good word, and give a helping hand to the courtship."

My face might well betray me, if being hot and scarlet up to the roots of my hair would do so, I do not think I ever felt half so angry or indignant in all my life before; my tongue was parched with anger and clove to the roof of my mouth; my very eyes seemed to be on fire, at last I found composure enough to speak what I hoped would be words of truth and soberness.

"Mrs. Dunbar," I began, my words almost choking me as I spoke, "you have never in all your life made a greater mistake than in coupling Mr. Denham's name and mine as you have done; the little attention

which Mr. Denham has paid me, has arisen solely from a desire on his part to shew kindness to one, who in the midst of this crowded city, is solitary and alone, and as to our acquaintance on board ship it extended no further than good morning or good evening; from the fact of his seldom drinking tea in your house except on Sabbath evening, you must be aware he has ample opportunities of becoming acquainted with beautiful and highly educated girls, such as I cannot pretend to compare with, younger than myself, the children of wealthy parents, having every advantage, while I with a plain face and no accomplishments, am obliged to work not only for my own bread, but for that of a younger sister; is it at all likely that a handsome and talented man, such as Mr. Denham, would for an instant entertain such an idea?"

"As to my own feelings with regard to the gentleman, the utmost limit has been admiration for his eloquence, one which by your own account, is shared in by hundreds of others; now Mrs. Dunbar should I ever hear this subject alluded to again, I will receive it as an intimation that you desire my absence from your house, and will take my departure within the hour, even if I have to seek a lodging in an hotel, until I can again procure board in a private family."

Mrs. Dunbar's face (during the time I was speaking, in what I daresay betrayed a very excited and angry mood, notwithstanding my desire and attempts to appear cool and composed), passed through the

different variations of surprise, consternation and dismay ; she had just commenced in a sort of apologizing strain. " Good gracious, pity me, what is the use of all this about a joke ? " when, fortunately for us both, her daughter made her appearance, in full blow of flowers and gauze around her head, flounces and fringe on her dress, to accompany me through the gas-lighted streets to the post office, looking so pretty and pleased with herself, that had my temper not been as sour as vinegar, the very sight of happiness like hers would have put me in good humour ; as it was I felt provoked that Miss Dunbar should have dressed so gaily for an evening walk through such crowded streets, and with difficulty restrained myself from making some remark on the unsuitableness of her attire, to the girl who had spent an hour in dressing, to accompany me in a long half dark walk, solely for my convenience. I suppose my good angel was near me and kept my mouth shut.

We walked on in perfect silence until we reached the post office, Sophy no doubt thinking of the chance there was of meeting some of her beaux, no great risk of disappointment either with a young lady who some time since assured me she had seven young lovers who regularly sent her hot-house bouquets each New Year's day and birthday, the said birthday being the twentieth of January, a time when such presents cost in Montreal several dollars each.

I read somewhere lately that "the reason why young men in the middling rank of life do not marry early now, as their fathers did, was because girls require so much money spent on them, before a young man can dare to make them an offer. They must be taken out to drives, frequent places of amusement, have trinkets and bouquets; this costs a deal of money which the young man furnishes, and the consequence is he counts his thirty or forty years ere he ever gets ahead enough to marry."

There is another cause which has an equal, if not more powerful influence in preventing early marriages among the middle class of society; girls are not now disposed as their grandmothers were to marry for love and work for money, or in other words to take their share in doors of the burden which in every case the young man who marries early must be prepared to bear, I mean to be saving and thrifty housewives, each according to the state of life in which it has pleased God to place them. It is the easiest thing in the world to do with less luxury, but it involves a little self-sacrifice and economy, and these virtues are fast coming into disrepute; I do not mean by this that because a woman cannot have a silk dress or a costly drawing-room to adorn herself with, and sit down therein in idleness, she should wear the same faded or grave looking cotton gown from morning until night, or that she should spend her evening hours, and perforce her husband should do the same, in the room

where she cooks her food, or washes and dresses her children. Far from it, in the poorest household of what may be called the middling classes, there is always a spare room, and it is not necessarily soiled because it is made the place of pleasant resort for the evening hours of the family, where the tired father seeks repose after the labors of the day, his wife with smoothly brushed hair and bright cotton dress, (not a whit more expensive than the brown one she wore in the morning), with the addition of her brooch or a bow of ribbon, seems in his eyes more sweet and beautiful than she was on the day he called her his bride.

But such a life, although without doubt it has more real happiness in it than any other, is in prospect utterly inadequate to satisfy the ambitious longings of the girls of the present day; they must dress in silk, and have feathers and flowers in their hats; they want the finery which must be denied them as the wives of men in moderate circumstances, therefore to satisfy this morbid love of dress, they enter the stores and offices in crowded towns; they go, plain girls with modest blushing cheeks, it does not take a long residence in a store or office to make them lose the gaucherie of blushing; they dress finely, it is true, but how sorely do they pay for it, no protecting arm around them, nothing but their own strength and endurance of fatigue, (a fatigue much greater than most poor men's wives undergo) between want and woe, and the strong sense of this marks their brow with lines of care even before their

youth is gone, their hard won wages is just enough and no more, to pay for bread and buy such expensive clothes as the increasing luxury of the day demands.

Now, would not these girls be far happier as the wives of farmers, or clerks, or mechanics? would not one word of genuine love outweigh all the poor meaningless admiration they sometimes must turn from with loathing in the long struggle with labor and temptation? and how they preserve their integrity the Angel of the covenant alone knoweth. Would not the smile of a little child be a thousand times better, than the bold unlicensed ogle which a girl so situated is subjected to, and cannot resent as her womanly nature would prompt her to do, lest in a second more she should have to listen with quaking heart to the question: "What is the reason Mr. Batseyes left the store unserved?" a question the answer to which may cost her her situation.

Is it not easier to work for one's own husband and children than for strangers? to feel you are queen in your own home, be it ever such a little one.

This desire for finery and independence, such as it is, will work woman a deadlier woe than any fetter she has ever worn. When she steps beyond the fair threshold of womanly power—the home where God has made her supreme, when she forgets or throws from her the commands of St. Paul—the example of Sarah, she most surely lays down a sceptre to lift a sword, the sharp point of which will pierce her own soul.

I have made a long digression. While Sophy was perhaps thinking of her beau, I was certainly thinking, not in such a pleasant way however, of the one her mother evidently thought was my beau, and had taken such a disagreeable way to me, and such a troublesome round about way to herself of finding out.

What would Mr. Denham think, I asked myself, if any of this hateful gossip should come to his ears? How his handsome brown eyes would stare, and his finely cut lip turn up with the contempt he would feel for the homely looking little dowdy, whom he had first heard of on board ship as "some governess girl," going to seek better payment on the Western Continent than her acquirements entitled her to in educated Europe, who had construed the merest commonplace attention into such a love as she was never capable of calling forth.

Of all contemptible weaknesses to which womanhood is heir, that of imagining herself the object of love to every man who pays her the civility we all expect from each other, had always seemed to me the most puerile and laughable; such a position I would assuredly occupy in his eyes, should this detestable nonsense of Mrs. Dunbar's ever come within the hearing of his ear. He was the only one in Canada who had ever been kind to me for my own sake; I valued his friendship, and I respected and esteemed him highly for his work's sake; I knew him, though a poor man, and on that account obliged to put up all through the hot summer of

Canada with the smallest room in Mrs. Dunbar's dwelling, yet to be generous beyond all others in the house when the needy came in his way; when the poor Irishman who cut the firewood in the yard of our boarding house fell from a cart on the wharf, disabling himself from working for many weeks, I found, from his wife, that Mr. Denham had all the time brought her ten shillings every Saturday morning; and when Mrs. Dunbar wished to make "a good bargain," as she expressed it, with the washerwoman, he would not listen to such a proposition; well do I remember the words used by him on the occasion, as repeated to me. "No, no, you must do no such thing; it is a cruel way of saving, to make either a poor washerwoman or needle-woman help you." His religion, like St. Paul's, was not a part of him, but a quality of the whole man, having its life-spring and stream in his own soul, and thus fertilizing the whole of his being, making his scholarship wiser, his dealings with other men safer, his manhood manlier, his joy more enduring, his strength stronger. His eloquence, such as I had never heard surpassed, seldom equalled, the crowds who went to hear the truths he taught, testifying to the ability he possessed in entrancing his hearers; at times assuming such authority in delivering God's message to guilty man, as to seem a second John the Baptist, crying "Repent!"

Such was the man whose friendship I was to lose without my power to help myself, if this stupid woman's tattle, which, for aught I knew, might be a

subject of conversation, and if so, most certainly of merriment, with her boarders,—should come to his knowledge.

On former occasions, when by laziness or negligence, my British letters were left to the last hour, obliging me to ask Miss Sophy to accompany me to the post office, the young lady always took care that our route lay along Great St. James street, which, with its numerous street lamps and lighted-up shops, was quite a gay scene at night, and where Miss Sophy's pretty little chignoned head had full occupation in nodding acknowledgements to the elaborate bows of her male friends; that evening, to my surprise, she made no objection, when on reaching the lower part of the town, I took the way to the post office by Craig street, instead of the more crowded and pleasant one we usually took; my own mind was troubled and dark; from morning to night I had had one trouble and disappointment after another, and now Mrs. Dunbar's ill-timed tattle had put a climax to the whole, adding a spice of anger, which for the first time in my life, I found impossible to control.

When we reached the post office, to my surprise Mr. Denham and the elder Mr. Redtape were there, evidently waiting our arrival; the former took my letters from my hand, and examined them, saying, as he did so: "I want to see if you have stamped your letters all right," put them into the post office; ere this was finished, Miss Sophy and Mr. Redtape had gone several yards in the direction of

Notre Dame street, a rather round about way of reaching home ; perforce I had to follow accompanied by Mr. Denham ; yesterday I would have been pleased by his escort, then it was most *mal-apropos*.

Almost at once he said, " Miss St. Clare, I came here on purpose to see you ; just as I was taking my way to spend an hour in one of the reading rooms, I was met by Mr. Redtape, who told me he was going to the post office to take Miss Sophy and you home, and I gladly availed myself of the invitation he extended to me to accompany him ; I was anxious to see you alone, and thus found an opportunity sooner than I anticipated."

I returned some commonplace answer, wondering what he had to say, and why he did not, as he had once or twice before done, ask to see me in Mrs. Dunbar's parlor. He continued—

" I was in Mr. Goldenow's office to-day, while you were there. I heard what he said about your money, and from the fact of your wishing to draw four hundred dollars at once, I am sure the want of it must inconvenience you. I have not the money myself or I would offer it, but from inquiries I have made in the course of the day, I find, if it is necessary, I can obtain it for you. If Doctor Balfour was at home my interference in your affairs would be unnecessary, but you are already aware he has left town, and probably will not return until next week,—it is possible not so soon."

The interest he appeared to take in my affairs,

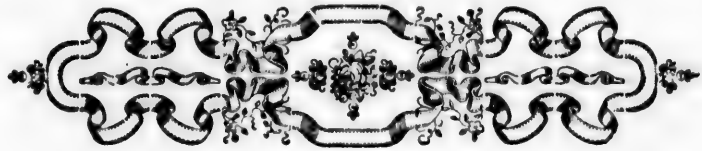
pleased and irritated me at the same time, how had he found out I was at Doctor Balfour's? My first impulse was to refuse his offer; for my own part I could do without money until my grandfather sent me my own, but how would it be with Mrs. Percy, were the Abbess to give permission for me to remove her to-morrow? how could this be done? I had only six or seven dollars in silver, which fortunately were in my drawer at Mrs. Dunbar's; had they been in my purse when I gave the money to the prioress I would have most likely given her all, but how far would this go in providing for Mrs. Percy's wants? All this passed through my mind in an instant of time, but with these thoughts came others; all my life long the idea of borrowing money, or being indebted for money to another, had been to me most revolting, and I felt, that unless for Mrs. Percy and in her absolute need, I could by no means accept of Mr. Denham's offer.

"You are kind to think of me and my concerns," replied I. "But I have just mailed a letter to my grandfather in Scotland, directing him to send me the money I failed to obtain from the bank to-day; it will reach Montreal in time to supply my own wants; if however I should require funds for the business which brought me here, before this money arrives, I will then accept your offer, and explain to you for what it is required."

It would have been well for me if I had not been so fastidious, and have borrowed the money offered

me in such good faith, to pay for a cablegram, the want of which threw a shade of doubt on all I had said to the nuns, with whom it now rested whether Mrs. Percy was to be restored to her friends, or again become the prey of her unprincipled husband. And the suffering which streaked my brown hair grey—the half of it might have been spared had I sent that cablegram!





CHAPTER XIX.

THE face that troubled him, would come between Captain Percy and the daylight all his waking hours, looking at him with its cold blue eyes and serious air, each day adding to the conviction that the one who bore it, knew more of his transactions during the past month, than he cared any mortal should.

It came in his dreams every night, mocking him with a bitter smile, never uttering a word, but pointing with silent eye and finger to the dead thing hidden under those heaped up unseemly sods in front of the Indian's hut, until it made Tiny rise from thence in her quiet beauty, telling all he had made her do and suffer in the long past, and then the climax came, and he brought her poison from distant Europe. And he heard her tell with quaking heart to crowds of listeners, men and women, that the blue bottle which contained the poison, would be found under the river, near the middle arch of the Lachapelle bridge, and then he would awake with great drops of sweat on his face and brow, his very hair wet, and feel so thankful when he found it was but a dream.

He had not seen the face for some time, although he wandered about in the principal streets every daylight hour, in hopes of meeting its owner and tracing her to her home; a clue to her whereabouts once obtained, he would trust to his wits and chance, to enable him to rid himself of her, when he had once assured himself she was prying into his concerns.

It was fully three weeks since he had followed her to Doctor Balfour's house, and he began to entertain hopes that he had been mistaken in the object that brought her to Canada, and she had now left Montreal. He had not yet received the hundred pounds he expected from his sister; he could not go without it, and even if it were now in his possession, it would not be wise to do so, while the shadow of a doubt remained what business had brought the spectre of his dreams to Montreal, and whether or not she had left it.

The great hope of Captain Percy's life centred in the expectation of a legacy of sixteen thousand pounds, which would fall to him on the death of an aunt, and he well knew were the story of his bigamy to go abroad to the world, his name would be instantly scored from her will.

While matters were in this state, his friend of the billiard saloon proposed to him a jaunt to St. Martin's, to see a cock fight which was to take place at eight o'clock next morning.

This might appear a low amusement for an officer in Her Majesty's service, but it was one for which

Captain Percy had an extreme relish ; he liked to see the enraged birds goaded on to each other, and enjoyed the riotous mirth and low jokes of the men around the cock pit.

His friend and he drove to St. Martin's by the Sault Recollet, and in passing Joinnette's house, which lay between them and the village, Captain Percy, to his horror, saw the face that troubled him, leaning over a book placed on the sill of an open window in Joinnette's house—in the house of the man he had tried to bribe, if not to kill, at least to leave Tiny to die of neglect.

The pleasures of the cock-pit were over for him, and excusing himself to his friend on the plea of sudden illness, he took his way to the house of the Curé, in hopes to ascertain from him what had brought this woman he so feared to be an inmate of Joinnette's house.

The Curé was in Montreal, and would not return, so the servant said, for two days ; his inquiries at the *auberge* were equally fruitless, the landlord only knew that there was a strange lady in Joinnette's house who had broken her arm by a fall from a *voiture* in the vicinity, and had been carried in there some weeks before. He thought of the doctor ; he was also from home, had gone to St. Therese to attend a difficult and dangerous case, and his wife did not know when he would return.

Captain Percy turned his horse's head at once in the direction of Montreal : he would seek out the

Curé by inquiries among the other clergymen there, and get him, if possible, to find out the address in Montreal of her who so troubled him.

Fortune favoured him this time; he had scarcely delivered his horse and vehicle at the Livery Stable, when he found himself walking along in the same direction, and a few paces behind the very Clergyman whom he had seen the lady so intimate with on the day he followed her to Doctor Balfour's house.

His mind was made up at once; he would follow this man, and endeavour to find out from him the particulars which he would now, if he had it, give a thousand pounds to be in possession of; at same time it must be done warily; he had a fertile imagination, he would be at no loss how to proceed.

He followed Mr. Denham along nearly the whole length of St. Catherine street, passing the house he himself boarded in, until in the middle of the very next terrace, the reverend gentleman stopped at Mrs. Dunbar's house, and taking a pass key from his pocket, let himself in.

The pass key told its own tale; the house was a boarding house, the reverend gentleman one of the boarders.

Captain Percy rung the door bell of the adjoining house—

"Does Mr. Jones live here?" asked he of the slipshod damsel who answered the summons.

"No, Sir."

"Is Jones the name of the lady who lives next door?"

"No, Sir, its Mrs. Dunbar who lives next door, and she keeps a genteel boarding house."

This was exactly what Captain Percy wished to know, and he at once took himself off; ringing Mrs. Dunbar's door bell and bringing Jenny with her blythe face to answer his inquiries.

"Is Mrs. Dunbar at home?"

"Yes, Sir."

"Do you know if she has any vacancy for a boarder?"

"I dont think it, Sir; you see Mrs. Dunbar does not keep a boarding house only takes a few well recommended boarders in with her own family."

Captain Percy understood the situation and took his cue therefrom.

"Well, I was recommended to Mrs. Dunbar's house by one of the Clergymen in town."

"Oh! I daresay," replied Jenny. "It has been Doctor Balfour that sent you; he often sends boarders. Mrs. Dunbar and the young ladies sit in his Church."

"Yes, it was Doctor Balfour," replied the truthful Captain Percy. "Do you know what Mrs. Dunbar charges for board?" inquired he, determined to elicit all the information necessary for his purpose from the girl, who seemed quite willing to be communicative.

"One of the boarders, a lady who has the best room pays seven dollars a week, and she has been

away in the country for two or three weeks, and pays her board the same all the time."

"What is the young lady's name?"

"Miss St. Clare, from Scotland."

Captain Percy inwardly congratulated himself; he was sure he had now obtained a part of the information he had been seeking so vainly for months back.

"Can I see Mrs. Dunbar?"

"Yes, Sir," said Jenny, ushering him into the parlor where that lady was sitting, having been an unseen listener to this conversation with Jenny.

Mrs. Dunbar regretted she had not a room to spare, the more so as the gentleman was recommended by her pastor, Doctor Balfour.

"I understood," said he, "from your servant, that one of your boarders is now in the country. I will explain to you what I want; perhaps you can accommodate me by giving me that unoccupied room until early to-morrow morning."

I come to town every week, and remain from one to four days. I have been accustomed hitherto to pay two dollars and a half a day at an Hotel; if you can make it convenient to accommodate me I will give you the same money. At present I only want the room, as I before observed, until to-morrow morning."

This was too good an opportunity to lose; the lady at once agreed to give him Miss St. Clare's room now, and by next week to have one prepared for himself.

As he was ushered into Miss St. Clare's room, Captain Percy asked—

"Does the lady who occupies this room teach the piano? I ask the question, because it is necessary for me to live in a house where there is perfect quiet."

"No, she does not, Sir; she seems to me to do little else than amuse herself; she is one of Doctor Balfour's congregation, and the first two or three weeks she was here, he took her round to the Churches and she had a good time jaunting about with the Minister."

Captain Percy smiled complaisantly, and informing his landlady that he always dined at the St. Lawrence, bowed her out of the room.

On her departure, he carefully locked the door, thanking his stars for the good luck which had probably given him an opportunity of knowing all he desired, without ever speaking a word to the lady, who, if necessary, he would never leave until he had done to death or destruction.

He first carefully looked round the room that he might know on what point to commence his search. A box stood on a table placed in the window, which looked very much as if it did duty for both work-box and desk.

He was right; the box was locked, but taking from his pocket a bunch of keys, applied first one and then another to the desk side of the box, which at last yielded to his efforts, displaying the inside well filled with letters.

He took good note of the way in which they were arranged, that after their perusal, each packet might be put in its own place, so as to excite no suspicion that the desk had been tampered with.

One packet he observed was in Robert Morton's handwriting, another by inspection he found to contain letters from Marion. He sat down, and deliberately read over the whole, and to his satisfaction found that up to the date of the last letter, there had been nothing heard or seen of Tiny, although as he surmised, their contents informed him Miss St. Clare had been sent on purpose to find Mrs. Percy, dead or alive, and from Marion's letters he could gather that she at least expected the living Mrs. Percy to be brought home to Scotland.

In the afternoon Captain Percy left the house, having finished his labours of reading the letters, dined with his wife a few doors off, and making an excuse for not returning home that night, made the best of his way to his favourite haunt, the billiard saloon.

At nine o'clock he again returned to Mrs. Dunbar's, where he was agreeably surprised by finding that in his absence the post-man had left four British letters for Miss St. Clare, one from Mr. Morton, another from Marion, he coolly appropriated the last two, to his own use, first making himself master of their contents, and then crushing them into the pocket of his coat.

They contained little information further than he had obtained from the others, except that in Mr.

Morton's reference was made to Doctor Balfour, and to the sum of money placed to Miss St. Clare's credit in the Scottish Mining Company's Bank.

Next morning he took his departure at an early hour, paying Mrs. Dunbar two dollars and a half, and arranging with his well pleased hostess for his future accommodation.

As early as etiquette would permit, he presented himself at Doctor Balfour's, where, however, he was informed that the Doctor could not see him until after two o'clock.

On his second visit, he sent in his name as Mr. Robert Morton, from Edinburgh, and was received by the Doctor in the most friendly manner, and informed by the Reverend gentleman, that Miss St. Clare had left the house only a few minutes previous. The residence of an English lady, an invalid, in the Indian's hut, was detailed to Captain Percy, and Miss St. Clare's suspicion that the same person was now an inmate of one of the Convents in the city, Doctor Balfour adding—

“I cannot tell you the whole particulars, as at the time of Miss St. Clare's visit, I was in great trouble owing to the receipt of a letter informing me of the severe illness, perhaps death, of my wife's mother, hence I could only spare a few minutes to hear what Miss St. Clare had to say on this deeply interesting subject, but my own opinion has always been that Mrs. Percy was in life, and I most sincerely hope that the lady now under the care of the nuns will

turn out to be the one you are so anxious to find." Doctor Balfour excused himself from a more lengthened conversation by saying that he and his wife were just on the eve of setting off by train for Upper Canada, in hopes they would be in time to see his mother-in-law ere her decease.

Captain Percy was once more on the street, although in a very different frame of mind from that in which he had entered Doctor Balfour's house.

He asked himself a score of times if this story could be even probable; he had seen with his own eyes the bottle containing the poison in Tiny's hand; he had heard her words, 'It is an easy way out of all my trouble;' he had returned in two days to find the Indian's hut empty and desolate, to find there a new made grave, and under the window where Tiny used to sit, the poison bottle lying empty, its cover open, the crystal stopper gone.

The evidences of Tiny's death were all in his favor, yet to make assurance doubly sure, he determined ere the night fell, to go to St. Martin's, and taking a spade and pitchfork with him, ascertain who was the inmate of that roughly made grave.

Whether Tiny was in life or not, Miss St. Clare's return to Scotland must be prevented at all risks, and Captain Percy had more than one plan by which he thought this might be effected; meantime, as a preliminary step he must go to the Bank, if possible possess himself of the money sent there by Robert Morton for Miss St. Clare's use, and if this could not

be done, at least prevent her obtaining another shilling of it.

On his way to the Bank he purchased some visiting cards, on which he carefully wrote Robert Morton's name, copying his signature as closely as possible (an art in which Captain Percy was an adept) from that on the letter he put in his pocket the previous evening.

Going into the Bank, he at once requested to see Mr. Goldenow, to whom he had sent the card bearing Robert Morton's name, and now introduced himself as that gentleman.

Without accusing Miss St. Clare of any particular crime, he gave Mr. Goldenow to understand that she had been spending the money entrusted to her solely to her own use, to the entire neglect of the mission she had been sent to Canada to fulfil.

He proposed drawing the whole of the money now in Mr. Goldenow's hands, and leaving her for the future to her own resources. Mr. Goldenow informed Captain Percy, as he expected would be the case, that he (Mr. Goldenow) could not make over the sum in question to him without some respectable gentleman in Montreal coming forward to identify him as Robert Morton, offering however to return the sum in question to the head office in Edinburgh, or hold it until orders were received from thence, as to how it was to be disposed of.

Matters being thus amicably arranged, the cashier accompanied Captain Percy to the door of the Bank,

deeply impressed with the kindness of heart the gentleman had shown in not publicly exposing Miss St. Clare, for the way in which she had so shamelessly abused her trust.

Captain Percy had done all it was possible for him to do in Montreal, and was now again on his way to St. Martin's; if he had known the name of the convent in which the lady supposed to be Tiny, was placed, he would have preferred going there, and asking to see the invalid of the name of Smith, the name which he knew the Indian must have given, but Doctor Balfour was unable to tell him to what Convent or by what means Miss St. Clare had traced her.

Montreal is a city of Convents; with the formalities required on seeking entrance to such it might be a week before he arrived at the one he sought; this was too long to endure the suspense which now made his heart quail and shiver, and coward as he was, he preferred the terror he knew must be endured in opening that lonely grave in the bush.

The evening shades were darkening around him as he once more tied his horse within the shadow of the ruined cottage wall, and proceeded on foot through the path to the Indian's hut; he could see the moon glimmering at times wherever a slight opening occurred in the thick pines and cedars of which the bush consisted, and although glad of the light thus afforded, he thought with horror of the ghastly face those moonbeams might reveal to him, ere his task of the night was completed.

More than once he stayed his steps, almost determined to return the way he had come, but a moment's reflection told him that he was on the edge of a precipice, and that the welfare of all his future life depended on his knowing its bearings, seeing and avoiding its dangers.

As he considered this, he would press on with renewed vigor, carrying the spade and pitchfork, which were to aid in the exhumation of the dead.

He was now in the little clearing on which the Indian's cottage stood, the moon shining down on the unseemly heap, where he hoped to convince himself his wife's body lay; he was wearied with his long walk through that narrow winding bush path, but he could not trust himself to rest in that eerie spot, where each breath of the wind rustling among the cedars overhead, startled him as if his wife's spirit spoke to scare his guilty soul.

Motion was necessary; had he allowed himself a moment's idleness, he knew but too well the cowardliness of his nature would have impelled him to fly from the place ere the work was accomplished he had come so far to perform, and was so necessary to be done.

He had already pitched several of the loose clods off the heap, when an owl hooted almost close above where he stood; he started with horror, and throwing down the pitchfork which he held in his hand, was about to betake himself to flight, imagining that the evil one was upon his track; as he lifted his head,

the moon's rays, shining on the owl, discovered to him the cause of his alarm; with a muttered oath he threw one of the heavy clods at the bird, and again commenced his work.

The sods were gone, nothing but loose earth remained, and this it was difficult to remove, the grave seeming to have been filled with underbrush. He continued his work, exhuming with the fork immense bunches of withes until after hours of hard labor, he found that he had been occupying himself in emptying a pit in which the Indian stored the willows with which he made his baskets.

For the last hour he had been working in the pit, it was at least a foot above his head, and his night of hard labor over, it was only after many fruitless attempts that Bertram Percy succeeded in extricating himself from the willow pit, and setting his foot on the grassy earth.

Scarcely had he found himself again on the level ground, when a heavy hand was laid roughly on his shoulder, and a voice, speaking to him in Lady Gordon's accents, although with a deeper cadence, called out—

“You villain, what do you mean by destroying the poor Indian's willow pit?”

Captain Percy looked up to a man upwards of six feet high, whose face bore every lineament of Lady Gordon's, the expression exactly what her's was in anger, one which he might remember well, being the only phase in which he had seen it during all his later interviews.

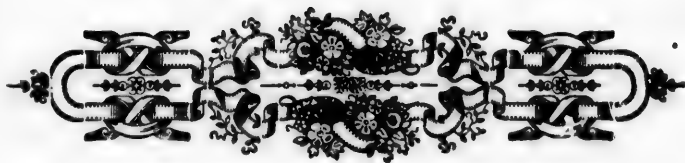
Captain Percy was horror-stricken ; his hair stood on end, while great drops of sweat coursed each other down his face.

"Do the dead rise?" he asked himself. "And if so, has Lady Gordon's spirit put on this great male body that she may crush me to atoms?"

Meantime the man in whose grasp he was, gave him several hearty shakes, and then almost lifting him from the ground, pushed him away, muttering as he did so "Reptile!" an appellation he was aware Lady Gordon had more than once bestowed upon him.

His terror urged him to flight, which he continued without cessation for the next hour, leaving the tall man and several others gathered around the Indian's willow pit.





CHAPTER XX.

I went regularly every day to the Convent, but saw little or no change in the poor invalid; four days had elapsed since my return from St. Martin's; while sitting at breakfast, four business cards from Moir and Strong's were handed in addressed to Mrs. Dunbar, her two daughters and myself.

For several days back we had been inundated by these missives. Moir and Strong's was one of the principal dry goods shops, and a tempting price affixed to their cambric pocket-handkerchiefs made me resolve to pay a visit to their store, in order to find some I would deem good enough for Mrs. Percy's use, and yet suited to my present slender means.

Moir and Strong must have been indeed assiduous in advertising their business; the shop was crowded in every direction, and although the shop walker handed me a seat, it was some time ere I could find any one to attend to my wants.

At last a young man who was endeavouring to serve one customer with lace, another with ribbons,

from a box of each material placed close together on the counter at which I sat, handed me a small box of hemmed cambric handkerchiefs from which to choose ; they were not such as I would purchase for Mrs. Percy, being ornamented with showy looking-embroidered flowers and monograms in the corners; and describing to the young man exactly what I wanted, I returned him the box, which was a small paste-board thing I could lift in my hand.

The boy mounted a step-ladder to bring down another box from a shelf before which he stood ; his lace and ribbon customers had meantime disappeared, but their places were quickly supplied by others clamoring for goods of different descriptions ; it was what is called a cheap sale day, and the clerks seemed to be at their wit's end, in a vain endeavor to satisfy all who came for bargains. I would certainly have taken the first pocket-handkerchiefs offered had not their garish ornaments been such as I knew would offend the taste of the one they were intended for. I had been too well accustomed to the selections made for her, and twice a year sent to India, not to know that those handkerchiefs, with their attempted finery, would be most unsuitable.

The boy seemed to have a difficulty in finding those I wanted, and while waiting for them I drew amusement from the conversation of a lady and her daughter, who were evidently employed in buying a marriage trousseau for the latter, at no great distance from where I sat. Both ladies, in their eagerness to be

understood by each other, talking in a key rather too loud for the place they were in.

All at once I heard the boy on the ladder stutter out in a half muffled voice something which sounded in my ears like "stop thief."

I looked up to the ladder where he stood, and saw a shocking spectacle, the boy evidently in the beginning of an epileptic fit, one hand holding a box of handkerchiefs, while with the other he seemed endeavoring to point to some one beyond me, his face distorted, while he tried to mouth out some words that were wholly inarticulate; a moment more and he would have fallen to the ground, but for the other clerks who came to his rescue as he fell.

There was quite a hubbub in the store; every face filled with consternation; those who had seen the catastrophe trying to tell others what had happened. In the midst of the confusion the shop walker came up to me, and putting his hand on my arm, asked me to step into the office to speak to Mr. Moir. I was rather surprised by the request, and asked the young man—

"What can Mr. Moir want with me?"

"He wishes to speak to you, Miss."

"If he does," replied I, "he had better come to me; he can have nothing to say that cannot be as well said here as in his office."

The man stooped down and almost whispered in my ear.

"It will be better for you to come quietly, Miss; you will not be suffered to leave the store, and if you show any resistance, I will have to take you into the office by force."

I was extremely indignant, but as I saw that I did not understand the man's meaning, and he possibly mistook me for some one who owed them a large bill, I thought it best to comply with his request, and desired the man to shew me the way to the office that I might follow him.

"No, ma'am," said he, "you must precede me, or take my arm, whichever you please."

I gave the man a look which was no doubt filled with indignation as I meant it should be; he laid his hand on my arm with a firm grasp, and so led me to the office, where I was evidently expected by a middle aged man, whom my conductor called Mr. Moir, saying as he entered—

"This is the young woman, Sir."

Mr. Moir looked hard at me, both anger and regret expressed strongly in his face, as he abruptly asked

"What is your name?"

"You have no right to ask my name," replied I, irritated at the authoritative insolent manner in which the man spoke.

"I am sorry you have given me too good a right to ask your name, and to know it too; you are a respectable looking young woman, it is a pity you could not obtain a livelihood by less nefarious practices."

My blood was boiling; the man had not even asked me to sit down, but kept me standing before him like a culprit, and I said, speaking as I felt—

"You are excessively impertinent to speak in that way to one you know nothing of further than that she entered your shop a few minutes ago to make purchases."

"I know this much of you," replied he, "that you and such as you, are enough to ruin every man in the trade, if your practices cannot be put a stop to; we will try what we can do in your case at all events."

As he spoke, one of the shopmen accompanied by a policeman, entered from a door in the rear, communicating with a back street.

"This is the woman," said Mr. Moir, addressing the policeman, "You had better search at once."

As he spoke, I must say I felt more at my ease than I had done since my entrance; I saw that I was mistaken for some one who in the crowd by which I was surrounded, had been detected in helping themselves to some of Mr. Moir's goods, a crime which I had more than once heard commented upon as one very prevalent in Montreal.

"With your leave, Miss, I will search your pockets."

"Certainly," said I, taking therefrom my pocket handkerchief in order to facilitate his operations.

The man put his hand in my pocket, and to my unutterable dismay produced therefrom a roll of blue satin ribbon, one of pink, and one of white, and lastly my purse, pocket-book and thimble.

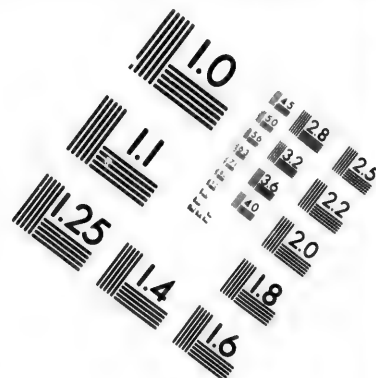
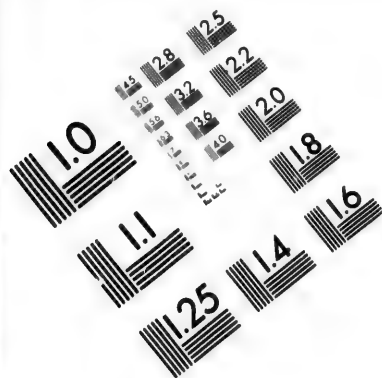
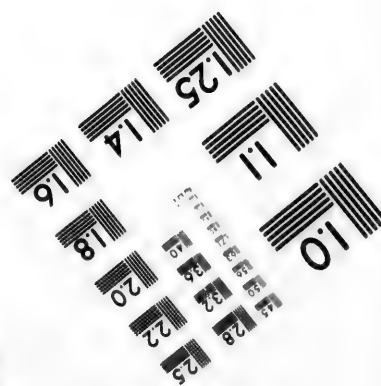
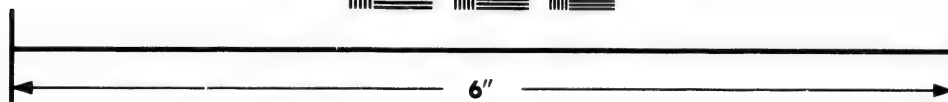
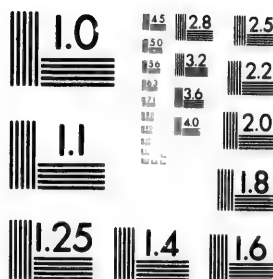


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"A precious good haul," said the policeman, "for one day's work."

"That is not all," said the young man who brought him in, "the gentleman told me he saw her put some lace under her overskirt."

"Well," said the policeman, "I suppose there will be no indelicacy in lifting the lady's overskirt" doing so as he spoke, I felt him pull something fastened to the gathers of my dress; in a moment more he handed to Mr. Moir, what seemed to me many yards of costly lace attached to a piece of wire hooked at both ends.

"That is a new dodge and a clever one" said the policeman. "This empty hook was fastened in her dress, the other one ready for whatever she could cabbage."

"Why," said Mr. Moir, addressing the shop-man, "here is the piece of lace we missed two days ago, one of the most costly articles in my shop, twenty yards of lace worth twelve dollars a yard, it must have slipped down between the lining and the box, where her clever fingers forked it out."

"I can assure you," said I, gathering strength from the peril in which I saw myself placed, "I never touched nor saw that lace until this moment; those ribbons I solemnly declare I never touched nor saw either."

"We are well accustomed to such stories," said the policeman. "Every one of your kind would swear down our throats that they are the honestest people in Montreal; in the meantime I suppose she

had better be taken to the police office, Judge Coursel is now sitting and she can be committed at once."

I raised both my hands and eyes in supplication to Mr. Moir, begging of him that he would send to Doctor Balfour and Mr. Goldenow, who would both satisfy him as to the impossibility of my committing such a crime, adding—

"My name is Miss St. Clare, and I live at Mrs. Dunbar's, number 8— St. Catherine street."

Drowning men catch at straws ; it must have been with some feeling of this kind I named Mr. Goldenow. While his name was yet on my lips I remembered distinctly almost the last words I heard him say when he refused to allow me draw any more of the money placed in his hands to my credit, "you ought to be very well pleased to get off so easily."

"Doctor Balfour is not at home," replied Mr. Moir, "But we will send to Mr. Goldenow and give you the benefit of whatever he can say in your favor ; I am sorry to see a respectable looking young woman and a countrywoman of my own, accused of the crime of theft, with such overwhelming evidence against her. A strange gentleman saw you put that lace under your overskirt, and in the moment pointed you out to this young man, informing him of what you had done. Of the ribbons we knew nothing, until the policeman took them from your pocket."

Mr. Moir, the young man and myself, were driven with the policeman, to the police-office, the policeman riding on the box with the driver.

We had to wait a long time; it must have been upwards of an hour, it seemed to me years. As we waited, a note was given to Mr. Moir, which he looked at and then handed to me; it was from Mr. Goldenow and contained these words—

“I can say nothing in favour of Miss St. Clare. I fear she has been leading a life of crime, during her residence in Montreal.”

I half expected his answer would be unfavorable, yet my heart sank within me almost to faintness as I read those terrible words.

At last my case came on, and in addition to the ribbons and lace found on my person, the same policeman produced several yards of black silk, a dozen of white kid gloves, two fine lace collars, all of which bore Moir and Strong's business mark. These he had found locked in my trunk in Mrs. Dunbar's boarding house, although it contained nothing else, my clothes being placed in the wardrobe and chest of drawers.

This of course was further confirmation of my guilt, if any such were needed to all concerned except myself; to me it only disclosed a deeply laid scheme for my ruin, by whom, I was then unable even to guess. I thought of Captain Percy; it was the idea of a moment. I had not seen him since previous to my residence in St. Martin's, certainly not that day, nor in Moir and Strong's shop; his appearance was too peculiar and too offensive to myself not to attract my notice at once if he was on the same side of the

shop, his being so near as to be able to put those ribbons in my pocket unobserved, was out of the question.

Again how was he to have obtained access to my locked trunk in Mrs. Dunbar's boarding house? The trunk I used as a receptacle for my soiled linen; in the morning before coming out I had removed all the soiled clothes that they might be given to my washerwoman; I had locked the trunk; the key was still in my pocket, yet the policeman had there discovered stolen goods; it was impossible that Captain Percy could have placed those things within a locked trunk, in a house he had never entered; the idea was too far fetched, too preposterous to be entertained for a moment.

The case was soon disposed of. I was committed for trial at the Quarter Sessions, hearing around me such sentences as "It will be a penitentiary case,"—"a complete roguery."—"She well deserves seven years, and she'll get them."—"This is the way the dry goods merchants in Montreal are mostly ruined."—

I could neither weep nor pray; my heart seemed to stand still; the only feeling I am conscious of during that terrible drive to prison, was a wild longing that I could throw myself into the river I saw through the openings in the rows of houses, as we passed.



CHAPTER XXI.

CAPTAIN Percy was well pleased with his work of the morning; he did not leave Moir and Strong's until he saw his poor victim on her way to be examined at the office, and then hastily quitting the store he jumped into a cab, giving the address of his boarding house, and ordering the man to drive for life and death.

On arriving, he ordered the man to wait, and rushing to his own room, where fortunately he found his wife was out, as she might have detained him for a few minutes, he opened his desk, taking therefrom several parcels which he hastily thrust into a valise, and this done, again made his way with what speed he could to the cab, desiring the man to drive to number 8—like lightning, if he could.

Again desiring the cabman wait, he sprang out and rang Mrs. Dunbar's door bell with all haste; Jenny soon made her appearance.

"Oh! Mr. Danville, is this you?"

"Is Mrs. Dunbar in, Jenny?"

"No Sir, she's just gone to market two minutes ago."

"Well, Jenny," said he, proceeding up stairs as he

spoke. "I'll just go up to the room I was in before, wash my hands, and leave this empty valise."

"Oh! Sir, you cant do that, the lady's come home."

"But she's surely not in her room this fine morning." Captain Percy was by this time inside the room, and throwing off his coat, as if preparing to wash his hands, said to the girl—

"I'll wash my hands and be out of the room in less than five minutes, and here's half a dollar to you, Jenny, for the trouble you'll have in emptying the dirty water and putting Miss St. Clare's traps in order before she returns. Go down, Jenny, and speak to the cabman, and take care he wont go off and leave me; these fellows sometimes do so. I'll be down stairs in a few minutes, and bring my valise with me; you'll give it to Mrs. Dunbar, and neither she nor Miss St. Clare will ever know I've been in the room."

Jenny ran down stairs, delighted at her good fortune in having gained half a dollar so easily, while Captain Percy, locking the door, opened Miss St. Clare's trunk with one of his own keys, which he had ascertained on his previous visit, would do so, put therein the parcels contained in his valise, locked the trunk, put on his coat, poured some water into the basin, threw the towel on the floor, and taking his valise, left it with Jenny in the hall, who, with smiling face and wondering eyes, stood gazing after him as the cab whirled him along towards Cote des Neiges. Rubbing his hands in his gleeful wickedness, he exclaimed aloud—

"I have struck the right nail on the head this time; she wont cross my path for the next seven years, that's certain, and long ere then my good Aunt Gilchrist will be among the angels, and her affectionate nephew Bertram in possession of his sixteen thousand pounds, because he is a good boy. I will give you the rest of this day to amuse yourself, Master Bertram; to-morrow you must commence your raid in search of Miss Tiny, who will of course feel lonely without her new found friend; when I get my ten fingers on her again, which I hope will be in the course of a day or two, she will find them talons, and if Bertram Percy knows himself, it will take the wit of the Evil Spirit to discover where he next hides her; perhaps after all it is not she who is there; there are a hundred places in the bush where the Indians might have buried her; I was surely crazy to think of their making a grave for her in front of their own door."

"And the empty bottle and her own words are pretty strong proofs in my favor; I hope for her own sake she is both dead and buried; if not she will find that her past life has been child's play to what her future will be."

On Mrs. Dunbar's return from market, about half an hour after Captain Percy's departure, she was surprised and not at all pleased to find a policeman had preceded her, and was employed in putting some questions to Jenny.

"What is it, Sir?" said Mrs. Dunbar, who although

the policeman was the last person she would have liked to see in her house, considered it policy to treat him with all politeness.

"I was just asking your girl here if you have a boarder of the name of Miss St. Clare, Madame?"

"Yes, Sir, pray walk into the parlor," replied the landlady, who thought it more prudent she should hear what he had to say of Miss St. Clare, without Jenny as a listener.

Once inside the room, Mrs. Dunbar carefully shut the door, at the same time asking the policeman in a low voice—

"What is it about Miss St. Clare? she's a very nice respectable lady, and quite intimate at Doctor Balfour's."

"I daresay that," said the policeman, imitating Mrs. Dunbar by speaking in a lower key than he had formerly used. "But she has been arrested for shop-lifting in Moir and Strong's; I took more than sixty pounds worth from her in their office less than an hour ago. I want to search her trunk or drawers or whatever keepings she has in your house, and in case I find anything, it will be necessary for you and some one else to come with me as witnesses while I make the search."

Poor Mrs. Dunbar's face flushed up to the roots of her hair; she was painfully solicitous as to the respectability of her house and family, and poor as she was, would have rather lost half her wordly goods

than have any room in her house searched for stolen articles.

"My gracious! what an awful thing!" exclaimed she. "Who would have thought it of her? this comes of a life of idleness, never working for a meal she ate, but wandering about idle through the streets, and"—Mrs. Dunbar stopped short in her speech, thinking it was better for her own sake the policeman should know as little as possible, saying mentally, "What do I know, but every word I say to him may be in the 'Witness' before to-morrow morning?"

"Come away up stairs, Sir," said she in an undertone, and ushering him to Miss St. Clare's room, called aloud to her daughter Sophy to come to her there; Shutting the door, she requested the policeman to proceed with his duty as quickly as possible; she herself informing Sophy in the same low voice she had formerly used, of all the policeman had told her concerning Miss St. Clare.

The drawers were opened and examined, nothing was found there, but in the trunk, as the reader is already aware, they discovered a piece of silk, white gloves and collars, all bearing Moir and Strong's business mark.

If possible Mrs. Dunbar's horror was increased at the sight of these articles.

"I hope and trust, Sir," said she, in a tone of entreaty to the policeman, "that you will not allow my name to appear in the papers; it is enough of distress in a respectable family to have had a thief

rising and sleeping among them without having our names in everybody's mouth, and indeed it would take the bread clean out of our teeth, did such a thing come to be known."

"Have no fear, Ma'am," replied the policeman. "I'll neither let your name nor your number appear in the papers; it's easy keeping both out by saying the things were found in Miss St. Clare's boarding house in St. Catherine street."

"That will be just the thing," said Mrs. Dunbar, her voice telling the relief the policeman's words had imparted to her. "Nobody who knows us would ever mix up my name with a boarding-house, but what do you think she would do with all that heap of white kid gloves?"

"Sell them, Ma'am," answered the policeman. "Them gloves is worth a dollar and a half a pair, and it's likely she would get three dollars for the lot; if there were no resets there would be no thieves, but there are plenty of both in Montreal."

After the policeman's departure, Mrs. Dunbar and Sophy sat down to consult as to the best means of concealing Miss St. Clare's delinquencies from their other boarders, and it was finally resolved on between them that no one except themselves should know what had happened, not even Medora, lest she should betray the secret to her lover, and the better to facilitate this concealment, Jenny was forthwith instructed should any one call for Miss St. Clare, to say she had left the house and was not to return, and that she,

Jenny, knew not in what place she had taken up her abode.

"As to me," said Mrs. Dunbar, after Jenny having received her instructions, had been dismissed to the regions below stairs, "If they come to me for information about Miss St. Clare, they'll go away as wise as they came."

"Poor thing," said Sophy, "I am very sorry for her; she was so quiet and nice in the house."

"So she was," replied her mother, "and paid her board regular to the day and no scrimping about it, with either board or washerwoman; so she might, these light fingered gentry earn their money easy enough. "Light come, light go," is an old proverb, and a very true one."

A fortnight had passed away in searching first for the Curé, whom according to Father Paul's wish the bishop had sent on a missionary tour, and then again in making inquiries at the various convents, ere Captain Percy discovered that the unfortunate object of his search was indeed an inmate of the convent of The Holy Cross. Captain Percy knew well in each instance how to proceed, and the prioress at once admitted, on his making the inquiry of her in person, which he took care to do, that a young woman named Smith had been left there until her brother would come to take her away.

"Then I have come now," said he. "I will get a cab from the next street, and be back here in a few minutes to remove her."

"Nay, not so fast," returned the prioress. "We have been informed that the person in question is the daughter of a lady of rank in Scotland, and it is most probable that even now there are those of her own kindred on mid-ocean who come to bring her home to her own land."

Captain Percy sneered ; he was prepared for this.

"I am sorry that the lady superior has been deceived," said he, "by one who is most unworthy, one who is now in jail in this city, and will soon be expiating her crime of theft in the penitentiary. It was Miss St. Clare who gave you to understand that my sister is Lady Gordon of Rockgirtle's daughter. You have not seen Miss St. Clare for a fortnight?"

The prioress admitted such to be the case.

"No," said he, "she has during that time been incarcerated in the Montreal jail for the crime of stealing lace and ribbons from the counter of Moir and Strong, by which means she supported herself, in expectation of being able to palm off my sister on this rich family as a daughter of the house. My sister is weak-minded, and at times fancies herself the lady whose name Miss St. Clare wishes her to assume ; if you take the trouble to send to the jail, you will find my words are true, meanwhile I shall go for a cab to remove my sister whom you have no power to retain."

"This evening I leave for New York *en route* for California, and must positively take my sister along

with me. I will be back here with a cab in ten minutes."

"Your sister is too weak both in mind and body to travel," replied the nun eyeing Captain Percy with a look which told him she had great doubts of the truth of his story and speaking with a voice of calm determination.

"She is no weaker now than she has been for years, and has been half over the world with me in precisely the state she is in now."

"As to your obtaining your sister (if she is your sister) to-night, it is simply impossible; you may be Smith or you may not, our Superior cannot tell; it is quite as possible that you have a sinister purpose to serve in obtaining possession of this young woman as that Miss St. Clare has such; you must bring the Curé of St. Martin's or the Indian who brought her here, to identify you as the man Smith, who you say you are, before we can hold any further communication with you upon the subject."

"I will bring neither the one nor the other," replied Captain Percy with the utmost boldness. "I will return here in ten minutes, and if my sister is not delivered up to me, I will apply to the strong arm of the law; you may have the pleasure ere to-morrow morning of having your convent doors forced open and all the low rabble of Montreal wandering through its cloisters, as a punishment for having shut up a protestant woman within your walls, whom her friends wish to rescue from your clutches."

Captain Percy was gone, and the nun shutting down the grating through which she had spoken to him, sought the Superior's room in much alarm, that she might inform her of what had passed in this short but turbulent interview.





CHAPTER XXII.

THE carriage stopped in front of the jail ; there were several others in it besides myself, one of whom, a young woman, was so tipsy as to be totally unable to move. I remember leaving it and going up some steps, and then all is darkness and a whirl.

I found myself sitting among many other women, young and old, in a large room ; a tall woman, whose words went into my soul like iron, was speaking to me as she stood looking down upon me with an expression on her face of contempt, strangely mixed with pity. I was sitting bowed down with my head almost touching my knees, she pronounced my name once or twice in louder accents as she spoke ; I looked up and saw her hard cold face, I thought her then the most unfeeling woman I ever saw, I lived to know she was exactly the reverse.

I looked at her only for a moment and then resumed my former position, my head bent down between my hands ; no part of my life before or since was ever fraught with half the misery that weighed down my soul almost to the grave, during the first day and night I spent in Montreal Jail.

I could not pray ; I could not think ; my soul was wrapt and wrung ; the Heavens above me were brass, the earth and all therein iron.

I heard a man's voice say "How long has she been here ?" The tall woman answered—

"She has sat there for four hours, bent down, and rocking herself to and fro, as you now see her."

"Poor thing, God pity her," replied the man, and putting his hand on my shoulder, he said in a pitiful voice, "I am a clergyman, will you not let me read a little of the Bible to you, or try to comfort you in some way ?"

Without otherwise moving myself I shook his hand from off my shoulder.

"It is better to let her alone," some one said close by, "it's hard to say if she is acting or not ; she imposed on them at the boarding house, and made them think she was half a saint, paying seven dollars a week out of what she could steal from the shops."

"Poor thing, she has driven her hogs to a bad market," said the man. "The policeman who came with them said she had the appearance and manners of a lady."

"If she got the breeding of a lady, she has made a bad use of it ; it will be a high jury court case, and she is sure to get seven years in the Penitentiary."

"Poor girl," was the reply, "however bad she is, she is some man's child ; the course she has been pursuing will make sore hearts in some home, perhaps

among decent people, who think to-night she is earning her bread in a respectable way, and will look for her coming home to them when she is serving her time in the Penitentiary, and perhaps learning to be worse than she is."

"I have no fancy for making pets of criminals," said the woman, "least of all one who has shown herself such a bold thief as she has done; not only do the merchants suffer, but the poor clerks have often to pay what is missing in their departments; how much would a poor boy have of his year's wages after paying for what she stole to-day?"

"That is true; the innocent often suffer more than the guilty, but if I am any judge of human nature, this poor woman is paying a dear penalty for her ill-gotten gains."

At night I was taken to the cell where I was to sleep, a place wide enough to admit a bed, with light borrowed from the corridor, and admitted by a space above the door which served as a window and ventilator both; I crouched down in a corner, as I heard the door fastened upon me for the night, keeping myself carefully away from the mattress and counterpane which formed the bed and bedclothes; that night, I would not have encountered the pollution of touching either; ere I left the prison I was thankful to lay my weary aching head down to sleep on the one, and to cover my feeble limbs with the other.

It was still early; the open space above the door

of my cell was opposite to a window in the corridor, an open window, and crouching as I was at the further end of the cell, I could see the patch of sky above, a grey leaden sky it is true, but still the firmament in God's Heaven, looming above the grass, and the trees, and all free things, things which man cannot lock up between stone walls, vilify and crush the life, and kill the hearts out of.

Through the open window came the sound of men and women's voices as they walked about in the street, working men and women after their work was done ; a star came out of the leaden sky and looked wistfully and pityingly on me ; why are they always so sad, those beautiful stars ? I often used to ask myself that question ; I knew then. It is because every night they look down on misery so great that the miserable ones cannot utter it ; breaking hearts that can never know peace again.

The sounds of busy life were all hushed, every insect had folded its wings and laid down to rest, to wait through the darkness until the sun came again bringing with him warmth and light.

I heard the water of the sea-like great river St. Lawrence as it swept past ; I knew that on its bosom every star which shone above was mirrored over and over again in its ripples and waves, as they knelt on the strand and laid their white hair down on the pebbly beach, worshipping the God who made the waters.—They worship in community all together, those free waves ; man cannot chain them and lock them up in lone places.

God pity the solitary, the helpless and wronged prisoners! Did not God know? Aye, He did, but that was no consolation then; for a moment or two it almost made me mad, that sense of impotence; what could I a feeble woman do against these men? this overwhelming evidence against me? if I had been a free woman that night, I know what I would have done; I would have gone down to that river and let its great waves sweep over all my bitterness of heart, my sense of impotent feebleness to combat so great a wrong.

Fastened up in that prison cell with its rank smell and polluted air, my heart went out after all things pure and free,—water washed Ararat—the pure cool springs on the mountain tops where God distils the clear water—sending it down to fill the crystal brooks in the shady dells—to give life to the lily bell and the blue veined violets.—The storm clouds on the mountain tops—the fertile valleys, with their wealth of yellow corn—the little birds—the red tipped roses in their white and crimson dress—“the beautiful and innocent of all earth’s living things”—

The happy dreams that gladdened all my youth, when my dreams had little of self, the plans I had devised to please all I lived among from my very childhood, all my earnest desires so seldom guessed, so little understood—the quiet steadfast love with which I strove to win what I coveted most, the love of others, grandpapa, Ella, all who were to me now, dead, dead forever.

On the morrow I had work given me which I was expected to do diligently; although I, like all in the same room, was not yet condemned, it was deemed expedient that it should be compulsory with all whose crimes or misfortunes brought them there, to employ themselves in useful work given them by the Matron, sewing, knitting or such like, not the oakum picking in which consisted the labor that formed part of the punishment of those who are found guilty of petty offences and condemned to a certain number of months' confinement in prison, in place of being sent to the penitentiary; the latter place being reserved for the greater or more hardened criminals.

The work given me, and the necessity there was for its being done well and quickly, was one of my mercies; I was by this means obliged to concentrate the greater part of my attention on my employment; one can never be wholly miserable who has work to do; hence my days, although surrounded by, and herding with the lowest of my sex, were less miserable than my nights, shut up as I then was in darkness, to brood over the terrible doom which had overtaken me.

I was fourteen days in jail when Father Paul the old priest I had seen in the Convent, came to see me.

If anything could have given me pleasure it was this visit; my own misfortune had not made me callous to the fact that there was one in the Convent of The Holy Cross, over whom a fate more dreadful than my own was pending, but I knew not how to

communicate with the nuns; it is true I had more than once seen nuns, Sisters of Charity, in the jail, but I hesitated to send a message by them.

I knew that the effect which the knowledge of my being in jail would produce on the minds of the Sisters of The Holy Cross would be anything but one likely to help the cause of Mrs. Percy, and I was in hopes that Captain Percy might not be able to find his wife's whereabouts until the arrival of Sir Robert Gordon or Seaton of Thurlow, from Scotland, would make it an impossibility for him to succeed in obtaining possession of the poor invalid.

Until then, I hoped they would attribute my absence to illness or some such cause. I had not given them my address, and Sandy Mitchell did not know it.

Father Paul told me that the previous day Captain Percy came to claim his wife, calling himself Smith, and the invalid his sister, and that it was he who had informed the nuns of my being in jail.

The priest dealt kindly and tenderly with me, assuring me of his perfect belief in my innocence; his clear blue eye telling me that his words were not mere words of course, but the truth. I told him all I myself knew, and he advised me strongly to have an advocate to plead my cause.

I told him I had written to two of Mrs. Percy's nearest relations, and that without doubt they would be here as soon as steam could convey them, explaining to him my inability to telegraph by the cable, owing to my money having been stopped at the Bank.

Hearing of what Mr. Morton had done, seemed to stagger the priest in his former opinion of myself; he looked into my eyes with a sharp scrutinizing glance, as if he would penetrate into the inner most secret of my soul. A shade of sorrow passed across his face—not sorrow for the situation in which he found me, but for my guilt! he however promised that Mrs. Percy should not be given up to her husband (unless the nuns were obliged to do so by law) until a reasonable time had elapsed, sufficient to allow of her friends coming from Scotland to her rescue.

The priest left me more sure than I had been before of the utter hopelessness of my own case; his readiness to believe in my truth and honesty at first, his blank look and altered manner when he became aware of Robert Morton's conduct, all told me what I had to expect; I had well considered all the bearings of the case, knew how it must end from the first day, when I was accused of the theft, and the stolen goods found on my person; yet the suspicious look in the clear eye of the priest, his changed manner told me more strongly than any words, that for me, a felon's doom in life and death, was all I had to hope for.

The prison fare was wholesome food, but I could not eat it, perhaps I could not have eaten more dainty food, my sinking heart within, around me prison walls, thieves and drunkards; I always tried to eat a mouthful of bread or potatoes, but one mouthful sufficed.

The matron whom I had thought so hard and stern, sometimes offered me a little cake ; I could not speak to any of them, and when she did so I shook my head, to signify I could not eat it.

Several times I found on being locked into my cell at night, an apple, a little milk, or a cake, but they were left untouched, my desire for food had passed away with my desire for life.

I had become so thin that my dress was wrapped around me, not fastened, and the girl who sat next me at work, (strange coincidence, one accused of stealing articles of dress from a shop in which she served), used to say, " You look like a ghost."

Upwards of a week after the priest's visit, I heard the matron say to a lady who was visiting the jail. " The grand jury are to sit to-morrow," and pointing with her finger to myself and two others, said, " these three are grand jury cases."

Almost as she spoke I fainted for the first time in my life ; when I regained my consciousness I was in the matron's room, the lady I had seen in the ward and the matron standing by the sofa on which I lay, a sweet smell of perfume around, and my face wet with the water with which it had been plentifully sprinkled.

" Take this, poor child," said the matron, speaking in a kind and soft voice, at the same time offering me a cup of tea, in a cup such as free men and women drink from.

I thanked her with my eyes, but put away the hand which held the cup to my lips.

"Try to drink it, it will do you good," said the lady, "and do not think of the past; it is all over now, and you cannot help it; it will be a warning for you in your future life."

"Poor thing," said the matron, "she has suffered enough already; I never saw any one take on as she does."

"Where are her friends?" asked the lady.

"I don't think she has any here; it seems to me the policeman said she's from Scotland."

"What part of Scotland do you come from?" said the lady, addressing me.

I shook my head, but did not answer.

"You need not think to get anything out of her," said the matron, a slight touch of anger in her voice. "She has not spoken one word, good or bad, since she came, except one day a catholic priest came to see her."

"Perhaps she is a catholic."

"Oh! no, she went to Doctor Balfour's church quite regular."

"Why! that is most extraordinary!"

"It is the case though."

"Perhaps she's not guilty of the theft," said the lady, in a suggestive voice. I could have worshipped her for the words, and the way in which they were spoken.

"Oh!"—replied the matron, an oh!—lengthened out for several seconds, "that she is; goods worth sixty

pounds were found on her person, besides a lot of things all stolen from the same shop that the police found in a locked trunk in her room at the boarding house where she lived ; look at her face, that would tell you she's guilty ; she never hears it spoken of without growing as red as fire."

What poor students of human nature most of us are ; no brute, natural or moral, is capable of blushing ; the blushing face is an index of an ascetic feeling which none but the thoughtful and sensitive possess ; it is one of the inalienable characteristics of a rational and pure minded being ; inordinate blushing has ever appeared to me as the evidence of extreme sensitiveness, yet this is the way half the world judge. One of my early memories goes back to hearing a girl of fourteen condemned by her mother and father as having broken a valuable piece of china and lied to hide her fault, on the testimony of her supposed tell-tale face, where the blood rushed in indignation at the way in which she was spoken to, while an elder sister, who was the real offender, sat at the piano, listening to the accusation with an unblushing countenance.

Thus it will be until the time comes when we shall know as we are known.

That afternoon the girl who sat beside me gave me a nudge with her elbow, saying as she did so, " There's somebody come to see you."

I looked up in Mr. Denham's face, as he took my hand and pressed it in his own !

"I have been searching for you for three weeks; ten minutes since I found out you were here."

I did not answer; I had no wish ever to speak to any one again. Words would have choked me then.

The matron came up to where he stood and said—

"You can speak with Miss St. Clare in my room, if you like, Sir."

He thanked her; it was evident they had not met then, for the first time.

He bent down that he might draw my arm within his own, and so conduct me from the ward. My first impulse was to refuse to go, and acting on this, I drew my hand almost rudely from his; he looked at me with a piteous expression in his face, as if he were pleading with me for another; a sudden thought of home and Ella rushed to my soul. I rose to my feet, and motioning him to lead the way, followed him to the room I had been in the day I fainted.

He wished to place me on the sofa, but I seated myself in an easy chair, and looked in his face, saying with my eyes, "speak to me."

"I have heard all," said he, "but cannot understand it; have you any enemy whom you could suspect of having put those things in your pocket? the things found in your trunk, preclude the idea of a stranger having done so to save him or herself from detection."

For the first time since I spoke to the priest, I found my voice. "No, I did not see any one I could suspect that day."

"Is there any one in Montreal who you think has any interest in injuring you? My dear Miss St. Clare, I am actuated by the dearest hope to myself in making these inquiries; the question I have asked has been impressed upon me as of the utmost consequence, by one of the cleverest lawyers in Montreal, who has accompanied me here."

He said a great deal more, all in the manner a fond brother would have done, if I had a brother, who trusted me implicitly, who in his soul believed in my integrity.

I told him why I had come to Canada, and of my having met Captain Percy more than once, and my fancy that I was followed by him the day he had gone with me to Doctor Balfour's.

His reply was, "It is Captain Percy who has done all this; with God's help we will be able, I hope, to bring it home to him."

I had no hope of any such thing; my troubled way was distinctly marked out, a prison with hard labor for years, and if my spent body survived that, a head bowed down with shame—a blighted name—a seared heart, which would never cease burning until God gave me leave to lie down in the grave.

He stayed a long time, essaying at times to say something, and yet he could not; I feared the Matron would want her room, and I said so.

"No," replied he, "she knows for what purpose I came here, and she is willing to give up her room all day if needful; she is a good woman, one far above

her sphere in life; I know her well: since the first week I came to Canada I have visited this place every third or fourth day, until the last three weeks, which I spent in vainly searching for you."

"For me," repeated I, my voice trembling as the thought filled my heart. "Can it be possible there is any one in Canada or even in the world, except grandpapa and Ella, who would take the trouble to search for me one day?"

He drew his chair close to where I sat; he took my hand in both his own, and said in a clear voice—

"Dear Ruth, will you be my wife?"

My head whirled round; my senses seemed to reel; I could not have heard aright; I looked in his face, my own must have expressed a look of blank surprise, as I asked—

"What do you say?"

"I am asking you to be my beloved wife, to give me a right to defend you before all the world, a right to call you by my name, this day, in this place, to accompany you where you must go to-morrow; there and then to declare to all men that you are my beloved precious wife."

It was a great temptation; for a moment or two I feared that my integrity was passing from me, but the Angel of the Covenant saved me; it was dear happiness for me to know—it had changed everything from blackest midnight to bright day—the assurance I had, that the only man I ever loved, one

for whom I could have gladly died, was willing to brave the world's cruel scorn for my poor sake.

It was temptation, aye the greatest that could have been placed in my path, for a single moment. I saw Judge and Jury strongly biased in my favor, the least shade of evidence I well knew would be eagerly seized on to exculpate one bearing his name, but it was only for one moment; my good Angel prevailed; not to save a score such worthless lives as mine must his fair name be joined to that of crime; it was enough for me to know that he believed me innocent, and good, and true; I had a life of misery before me which even his love could not heal, but the knowledge that it was mine had already lightened the load I had to bear, the shadow could never be so black again, but could I be weak or wicked enough to let my blighted name, with its blackness and mire, clog and soil his white garments, there was no balm in Gilead which could heal the bitter pain, the sorrowing regret, which must be mine through all the long hereafter.

No, the cross which had been given me, I must lift up in all faith and humility of soul, but it must be done alone, alone.

My voice was naturally low, and now it was like my body, weak and powerless, yet even in my own ears, if soft and low, it rang out clear and true, as I answered—

“No, no, that can never be, a thousand times no.”

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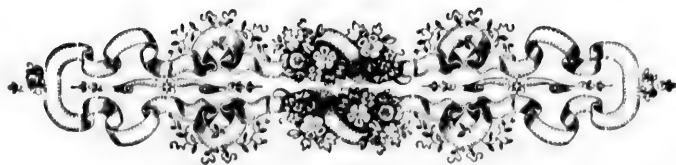
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IN SEARCH OF MOMANDACOKWA



CHAPTER XXIII.

CAPTAIN Percy did not return to the Convent in ten minutes, as he had threatened the prioress he would.

He went to his friend Mr. Sharpquill a lawyer, a clever rogue, who he knew would tell him the best way to get immediate possession of his wife, if such a thing was possible.

That worthy listened to all Captain Percy had to say. "You must get the Curé or the Indian to certify to your identity; in no other way can you obtain your wife; you had better ask for her in your own name, the nuns are evidently aware who she is; it is better you should say you concealed her name, as your poverty was such you could not afford to place her in the care of people befitting her rank."

"They may in that case deny giving her on the plea of my being married a second time; this would place me in an awkward dilemma."

"Not at all, you are surely able to deny that; you had better send Mrs. Smith out of the way."

This was easier said than done; the hundred pounds promised by his sister had not yet arrived, his means were now reduced to a few pounds; Abby

was in bad humor, she had been so for weeks, she would not move from Montreal unless he were able to give her a sum sufficient to support her for several months.

If he could himself go with her it would be different, he could then take her to some of the large eastern cities in the United States, go out promising to be back in half an hour, and leave her to her meditations for life, if he pleased; she would not come back to Montreal even if she could, she hated the place, its priests and nuns, its french inhabitants, whose language to her ears was a jumble of meaningless words; she was an energetic strong woman, he well knew she was sick and tired of him as much so as he was of her, she would find work for herself in a store, she could not write to his family, he had even in the days when his love-fit for her was hottest, carefully concealed the address of his relations from her; all would be safe, could he only spare three days to take her away, and return without her to Montreal.

But this was impossible; he had still Tiny's watch, he could sell that, it would bring him enough to pay the expense of such a journey, but every hour of his own time was precious; Tiny must at all hazards be removed from the Convent, ere any one could arrive from Britain, who was able to recognize her; if one of those detestable Gordons or Seatons should set his eyes on her, he (Captain Percy) might bid farewell forever to his aunt's sixteen thousand pounds; as to

his claiming her from the nuns as his wife he could only do this with any safety to himself, by imposing on them the belief that she was his second wife, not Lady Gordon's daughter.

He could come to no final decision as to this; he must be guided by circumstances; she could be made to represent either his wife or sister which ever was most convenient to himself; he doubted not the nuns were all French women and spoke no language but their own; Tiny could not tell them who she was.

The first thing to be done was to find out where the Curé was to be found. On passing through St. Martin's after the disagreeable encounter he had with the stranger at the Indian's willow pit, he had gone to see the Curé, to ascertain from him in what Convent Mrs. Percy had been placed, but found he had gone on a Missionary tour, neither his servant nor verger could tell where.

Following Mr. Sharpquill's advice, he determined on making a bold stroke to find the address of the Curé; he dressed himself with scrupulous care, looking so much like the Captain Percy of balmy Indian days, that Abby of her own good will volunteered to kiss him, a favor she had become very chary of lately.

"Where are you going, that you take such pains in dressing?"

"To pay my respects to the Catholic Bishop. I find it is a Catholic company of the guards who are

coming here, and it will be rather awkward if they arrive before I have seen his Lordship, and he comes to know that I have been so long in Montreal."

"So they are really coming, and you are to join again?" said the delighted Abby, inquiringly.

"They are really coming, and I am determined to join them," replied her truthful husband, kissing her hand as he took his leave.

The handsomest carriage and pair he could hire was waiting for him; he stepped in, calling to the driver—

"To the Bishop's palace."

In a few minutes he was in front of *l'evêché* and presenting his card, one prepared for the occasion, ("Captain Bertram Percy, of her Majesty's Guards,") demanded an audience of Monseigneur.

His carriage, appearance, and card had the desired effect. He was shewn into a receiving room, where the simple French priest in attendance was at once impressed with the consequence of his guest, and desiring him to wait, gave a flattering account of his gentlemanly deportment to the bishop, as he delivered the card which immediately gained him admission.

He was received with suavity, and after paying the usual compliments, entered on the business he had on hand.

"I am anxious to see the Curé of St. Martin's, Isle Jesus, with as little delay as possible; on going to

his residence I was told he had gone on a mission, will your lordship kindly inform me where I must go to seek him?"

The bishop looked with inquiring eyes in the face of the speaker.

"What business can a stranger and an Englishman like yourself, have with the Curé of St. Martin's?"

"The Curé of St. Martin's is a particular friend of mine, and is in possession of information which it is of importance to me I should know, if possible, within a few hours."

The bishop was cognizant of the residence of the invalid lady in the convent of The Holy Cross, of the extraordinary way in which she was brought there and the reason which made father Paul desire the absence of the Curé for some weeks from his curacy. Without in the least departing from his usual urbanity, the prelate replied with a gravity, a severity of deportment, which in one of inferior rank, might have seemed rudeness.

"We of the catholic church do not confide to strangers the place to, or the object for which our clergy go on missions; you cannot see, or even communicate with the Curé of St. Martin's for many weeks."

Captain Percy was confounded; it never entered into his calculations that having seen the bishop, there could be any difficulty in obtaining from him the residence of the Curé; the only obstacle which appeared to him to stand in his way was getting

admission to the bishop,—*that* he had cleverly surmounted, and now he seemed to be further off than ever from the object he sought; he endeavored to reassure himself, and was about a second time to address his lordship, when the prelate stopped him short, by saying, with the same courtly politeness as before—

“We will not detain you, Captain Percy; Monsieur Prevost,”—a slight inclination of the hand in the direction of the door told Monsieur Prevost as plainly, and perhaps more forcibly than any words, to conduct the stranger from his lordship's presence.

Captain Percy was no sooner seated in the carriage which was rapidly bowling along towards his boarding house in St. Catherine street, than he ground his teeth with rage, finishing up by sucking and biting his under lip, and then varying the pantomime by shaking his fist at, and muttering curses against all and sundry, from the bishop down to the poorest priest in the church.

“The curse causeless shall not fall.” The word is true now, as in time past. When Captain Percy took his departure, breathing out threatenings against bishop Bourget, he was a feeble old man who had just appointed a coadjutor. Now that several years have passed, I see him from my window while I write, a hale looking erect man, walking up and down on the outer corridor in front of his palace.

“A pretty kettle of fish I have made of this business,” Captain Percy exclaimed aloud, as soon

as his anger had cooled off sufficiently to enable him to give utterance to his thoughts. "I have spent three of my few remaining dollars, besides frittering away several hours of precious time, and am no nearer to the object I seek than I was yesterday; as a last resource I shall visit Monsieur Picard at the seminary; he is a good natured fellow; if he can help me I daresay he will."

Putting his head through the side window, he called to the driver—

"To the Seminary of St. Sulpice."

To the Seminary he went, and saw Monsieur Picard, but he could give no information whatever concerning the Curé; did not even know he had left his home; could not even guess where it was likely he would have been sent.

Captain Percy related his interview with the Bishop; not however repeating all the Prelate's words, and while doing so, could not help betraying his chagrin at the result.

The priest heard him in silent surprise, and when he had bowed his guest out, and leaving the vestibule sought his own apartment, he could not help soliloquizing thus in accents half aloud—

"Call on the bishop, forsooth! that fellow has insolence lined with confidence; I doubt not he would as soon as not ask a dozen questions of St. Francois Xavier, if he could only reach his abode."

The Indian was now his only resource, and without returning to St. Catherine street, Captain Percy

at once set off for Caughnawaga, to endeavor, through some of the Indians there, to discover at least in what direction the Indian had gone, and what reasonable prospect there was of finding him in time to be of any use.

Here he was more successful. Baptiste, the Indian pilot, undertook to find out in what direction Mamondagokwa and his friends had gone to hunt, giving it as his opinion that they were not yet very far off.

It was several days ere Baptiste could arrive at any certainty as to the route the old Indian and his party had taken, and when at last what seemed reliable information was obtained, it was found necessary for Captain Percy to return to Montreal, and hence by Ottawa, to proceed to Portage du Fort. The Indian had been there three days previous, it was possible he might be there still, if not, information of his route and a guide to his camp, could easily be procured at Portage du Fort.

It was several days more ere he reached the Portage, travelling by rail and boat, and last of all by the rumbling old diligence still used in the interior, and which, travelling sometimes at the rate of four miles an hour, seemed to mock the haste with which Captain Percy, if he could, would have flown to meet the object of his search.

When at last he arrived at his destination, and found the Indian of whom he was to obtain a clue to Mamondagokwa in case the latter should have left the Portage, he found that the camp which he sought

was forty miles to the north, and only accessible by a canoe.

He was a desperate man; it was a race against time, which was to make or mar his fortune in all his future life.

He took from his now rapidly decreasing store twenty shillings in silver, a large sum in the eyes of an Indian, and holding the money in his hand so that it could be distinctly seen, he said—

"I will give all this silver to the man who will take me to the old Indian's camp, leaving this at day break to-morrow morning."

There was a pause of several minutes; the Indian never hurries himself; and a group of seven or eight men by whom he was surrounded, looked first one and then another in turn at the coin, as if they would assure themselves it was genuine, and in sufficient quantity. At last one of the strongest looking, said—

"I and my sons will take you to the camp for the silver you offer, if you give it to me before we lift our oars, but we will not trust the word of a white stranger, we or our tribe have never seen; and if we go, we must depart when the moon rises, I must be back at the Portage before the moon throws the shadow of that great poplar on the river to-morrow night. I have spoken."

Each of the sons gave utterance to an "ugh, ugh," as if in acquiescence of what their father had said.

This haste was exactly what Captain Percy wanted, and the money was at once placed in the Indian's

hand, he making inquiry as he did so, if the moon would give sufficient light for the first few hours of their journey.

"She will not of herself, but the red star will help us: he gives all his light now," was the reply.

Away they went, the Indians and the white man, at times rowing in a broad expanse of water lit by "the light of stars," the strokes of the oars on either side resembling the way of a great sea-bird, as they rose and cast the drops of bright water from them like showers of diamonds in the clear night. Again winding their silent way between huge rocks which hemmed them in on either side, leaving them in darkness which no shadow could deepen.

To Captain Percy's feverish mind, so keenly alive to the necessity there was for his reappearance in Montreal, so nervously anxious for the haste which seemed foreign to the nature of these lymphatic Indians, their progress appeared so slow, that instead of performing a journey of eighty miles before the morrow's night, he feared it would be that time or later ere they reached the Indian camp.

They had reached a part of the river where it broadened into a lake, studded with small tree-covered islands, on one of the largest of which were several lodges, forming a small encampment of Indians, a number of whom came to the water's edge as the canoe swept by.

The Indian who made the agreement with Captain Percy, spoke to those on shore a long speech for an

Indian, who is generally laconic in the extreme, yet he did not for one moment rest on his oar, but swept on, continuing to speak even after his back was turned towards his listeners.

The Indians on shore replied by two or three "Ugh, ughs," and in a few minutes the canoe, with its white and red freight, was far past the little islands and their dusky inhabitants.

It was as these islands receded, and at last disappeared from his view, that Captain Percy realized the canoe was making a swifter passage than any boat rowed by white men could do.

"What were you saying to your friends on the island we have just passed?" inquired Captain Percy.

"Telling them we will be back to-morrow night, and waiting for them; they are to go with us to Onandago."

"To Onandago!" repeated Captain Percy in surprise. "Do you mean Onandago, beyond Brantford in Ontario?"

"The same."

"You cannot hunt there?"

"No."

"Then why do you go?"

"We go to sacrifice the White Dog. The bush where we worship the Great Spirit, and make the great sacrifice, is not more than four leagues from Onandago. Onandago is the place we all meet."

"Then you are not Christians?"

"Christians? No," replied the red man, his fierce black eyes fixed on Captain Percy's white face, as it showed pale and fear-stricken in the light of the broad moon, now high in the Heavens. "What made you think we were Christians?"

"I thought all civilized Indians were Christians; that it was only the savage Indian in the far west who remained a heathen."

"You are better informed now. Why should we become Christians? Much of the evil among us came with the white man. Who brought us the fire-water to make fools of the wise? The Christian, who says that his God is the true God. And who comes to rob us of our land, to drive us from the great rivers where the large fish abound, from the bush full of lightwood, and turn our hunting grounds into corn fields for food, such as they themselves desire to eat, our pleasant woodlands into acres of grain to supply them with fire-water? These are not the means by which you can turn the Pagan Indian from the worship of the Great Spirit to serve the Christian's God."

Captain Percy felt ill at ease when he found that his companions were Pagans, men who even now were preparing for the sacrifice of the White Dog, yet it is hard to say why he should fear them; his own Christianity was nothing more than an empty name, the very errand he had come upon, and for which he sought the aid of the red man, Mamondagokwa, was so atrocious, so directly opposed to the teaching of Him, whose last commandment was "love one

another," that his fear of the Pagan Indian, his leaning to Christianity (like his own ?) was a paradox.

The encampment was at last reached in the grey light of a frosty autumn morning, when the forest was shining red and gold, and the bright plumed birds sang their farewell carol ere they departed to seek a more genial clime, where the frost and snow of Canada, so soon to freeze every living thing exposed to its fierce cold, could not reach them.

Mamondagokwa was easily found, but not so easily persuaded to return to Montreal ; in fact it was only by giving him Tiny's watch and chain, that he at last consented to do so.

The place they were now in, presented itself to Captain Percy as a most suitable retreat for his poor wife, should she live to survive the fatigue of a journey hither, and in case this should be his resource, he made inquiries of several of the squaws as to the price they would take for boarding the poor invalid. He found to his satisfaction, that in the wild Indian bush where he now was, twenty shillings a month would be considered ample remuneration for the food and care his wife needed.

"Good," soliloquized he aloud, "she will be made of stronger stuff than I think she is if she stands the shaking she will have on this journey for a month ; if I had only known of this place before, what an amount of expense and trouble it would have saved me."

He laid his plans well ; we shall see how they were carried out.



CHAPTER XXIV.

IT is said that criminals on the night succeeding their condemnation, and also on that previous to their undergoing the extreme penalty of the law sleep more soundly than their wont.

Perhaps there is a law of nature in this; that is one of the things we cannot know yet because our eyes are holden, certain it is that on the morning of the second November, the day appointed for the sitting of the Grand Jury, that on which my case was to be decided, I rose refreshed and strengthened by the only night of uninterrupted rest I had known since I was an inmate of the jail.

I rolled up my bed, and knelt down to pray to my Father in Heaven for strength and faith in His promise during the bitter trial I had to undergo that day; it made me shiver even to think of it, to stand as a criminal in the sight of hundreds of staring men and women, who, when the evidence was all heard, would hear me proclaimed a thief.

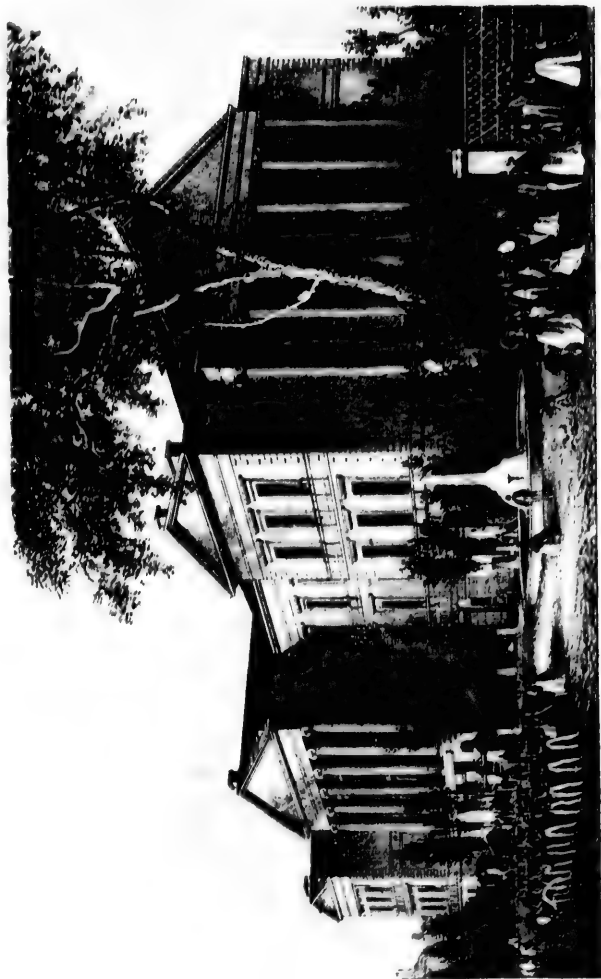
"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise." I rose from my knees, wholly resigned to His will. I knew there was no hope of my innocence being proved, the last faint ray of hope (if I ever entertained

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such after seeing the things which were taken from my trunk) departed, when, the night before, the lawyer brought by Mr Denham, after examining and cross-examining me for upwards of an hour, said, with a look and voice, which spoke more painfully—more plainly than his words—

“ You had better plead guilty ; it will shorten your term of imprisonment.”

“ I cannot do that. I cannot stand up before God with a lie in my right hand.”

“ Do as you please. - I have given you the advice which I am certain is the best ; with the evidence there is against you, no one can believe that you are innocent.”

I had no hope of escape from the felon's doom awaiting me, but I had faith given me to leave my cause in God's hands, and His word came back, as if written with an angel's pen, “ Be not afraid, the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.”

My heart rested on this His own promise, and in all humility I lifted my soul to God, and said, “ I will cease from man ; it is time for Thee, Lord, now to work.”

Mrs. Balfour came with Mr. Denham at nine o'clock to accompany me to the court, but this could not be allowed. I must go in the conveyance which was to bring the other criminals ; there could by no means any favor be shown to me more than another ; crime is a great equalizer.

I remember even now all Mrs. Balfour's kind words, the cheery way in which she spoke, endeavoring to make me believe that in the end I would see and acknowledge that even this sore trial was for the best, doing all she could to make me commit myself unto the Lord,—to Him who is mighty to save, even unto the uttermost.

As the time drew near for us to be taken to the court house, my mind got into the same confused state as when I was brought to prison; my brain seemed to whirl round, my head so dizzy that without help I could not stand. I remember nothing of leaving the prison, or of entering the great waggon-like thing in which I found myself in St. Mary street, looking at a girl, who toiled along carrying a loaded basket, evidently too heavy for her strength. She had a homely face, and was poorly dressed; she stood and looked at the conveyance with pitying eyes, and said to a bystander—

“These are the prisoners going to the Jury court; poor things, God help us, it is enough to be poor without being covetous, they would give all they have in the world now to be free.”

I would have given all I had in the world to be that girl with her heavy basket.

I was in the prisoner's dock, I suppose they call it. As I was passing into it, some one said—

“I will keep as near you as I can, and the Angel of the Covenant will be close by your side all the time.”

When my eyes and my mind cleared a little, I saw

Mrs. Balfour not far off, and I knew then it was her voice which spoke to me.

There was a great crowd, a sea of heads in every direction, yet strange to say, I looked around with prying eyes, as if I expected to see some one I knew, and so I did; I saw the young woman Captain Percy called his wife; she was seated in a conspicuous place, and in that solemn moment, when my happiness or misery, my good name for life was on the cast of a die, I noted such trifles as her leghorn hat with cherry-colored feather.

She looked hard at, and recognized me, spoke to a plainly dressed lady-like person seated next her, who also turned her face in the direction of the dock.

Captain Percy too was there; not near his wife, standing amid a crowd of other men, not very far from where I stood; he too saw and knew me; a triumphant smile passed over his face; the expression brought me back to Lady Gordon's cabinet room, the picture in the blue dress, and I felt my heart beat with fear lest he now had possession of the original.

For a second or two my own deadly peril was forgotten; I must have stared in an offensive manner in Captain Percy's face; he lifted his hand close to his cheek, and half curving his finger like a claw keeping it below the level of his eye, pointed it in my face!

I withdrew my eyes instantly; the sea of heads swam round and round; I clutched hold of the bench

in front; without its support, I must have fallen to the ground. I tried to keep my eyes from again wandering in the direction of Captain Percy, but it was impossible for me then, his face had all the fascination of a basilisk; do what I would, my eye still sought his face.

I saw him turn pale with rage; he thrust out his tongue rolled it round, and with it again pointed in my face, his gestures attracted the attention of a man who stood next him dressed in the clothes of a mechanic; the man looked in the direction Captain Percy's tongue pointed, and then turning round, struck the tongue and mouth with his clenched fist.

There was a commotion around the place, a policeman moved towards them, the mechanic had disappeared.

The Queen's advocate was summoning up the case; I heard detached sentences; at times I could not hear, at others I could not see; my body felt numbed—my brain half dead,—I still clung with both hands to the bench.

Whether it was the grimaces of Captain Percy, repeating themselves in exaggerated forms on my brain, I know not, but all around, over the heads of the people, I distinctly saw what seemed to be evil spirits floating about in every direction, pointing their claw like hands and the points of their enormous bat wings in my face.

I could not concentrate my attention to listen to what was urged against me, but the words of the Queen's counsel fell in detached sentences on my ears.

"The young woman had no ostensible means; we find her giving seven dollars a week for her board—she did nothing except walk about the town."

I heard the witnesses examined. Mr. Moir's shop walker, saying—

"A gentleman came towards me, and pointing to the prisoner, said, 'I saw that young woman take a large piece of lace from the box in front of her, and fasten it under her overskirt.'"

I saw the lace and ribbons they had taken from my person handed to the Jury.

The policeman said something I heard, but could not understand; then the piece of black silk, the gloves and collars found in my trunk, were shown.

A gentleman got up and said something in my favor; that I was sent out here to find the grave of a lady who died some years before. He spoke for what to me seemed a long time, but in all that sea of heads, not one appeared to be biased in my favor.

I saw and heard Mrs. Dunbar and her daughter Sophy examined. Sophy looked at me several times with a pitiful expression, but her face bore unmistakable evidence she considered me guilty.

Mrs. Dunbar was the last witness, she was evidently unwilling to say one word which could criminate me. I heard and comprehended more of her words than of all which was previously said by the others. The first sentence I heard her say, was—

"Of course I saw the policeman take out the silk

and things from the trunk, but I did not see her put them there."

"No. The room was not used in her absence only one night by a gentleman who comes to our house once a week."

"We never saw anything but honesty and respectability about Miss St. Clare. She thinks she lost two letters, and I am afraid she did, but we never lost anything all the time she was in the house."

"Yes. She always kept the trunk locked, although she said it was empty; I offered to send it to the garret out of her way, but she would not allow this to be done."

After this, there was a short pause, and then a gentleman said a few faint words in my favor. He was ill at ease, it was evident he spoke ~~in~~ ^{against} his conviction.

A few minutes more; the one I knew to be Queen's Counsel got up and addressed the jury in a speech which seemed to extend into long hours, proving almost to myself that I was the thief, saying I was evidently a practised hand; it was true they had ascertained beyond a doubt the prisoner was sent to Montreal to find the grave of a Mrs. Percy, who died here some two years previous, but the money which was sent out for her use while so employed, had been stopped by the very man who remitted it, stopped at the Bank by the gentleman in person who was a day and night in Montreal, and while here, held no communication whatever with

her, she being wholly ignorant of the fact of his having been in the city, until she went to draw a hundred pounds, which fortunately she was unable to do.

He stopped for a second or two, and then went on to bring before the attention of the jury the frequency of such crimes, by which not only Merchants lost every year large sums, but by which occasionally poor clerks, with families to support on limited salaries, had to make good the losses thus sustained in their own departments, sometimes as in the present case, to the amount of half their income.

Again there was a long pause, this time longer than either of the others, a hum of suppressed talking in the court—one of the jurymen rose, and in an ordinary tone of voice, that was distinctly heard in each corner of that great apartment, by every one in that closely packed sea of heads, spoke one word—"Guilty!"

I heard it well, and understood its import. I expected it—was prepared to meet it—it entered like red hot iron into my soul, but it could not kill—it could not even make me blind or deaf for one moment. I never was so painfully conscious of everything around, of all the great eyes that were staring on me, as at that moment.

A glass of water was offered me—I did not see the face of the man who handed it to me, but I knew the handsomely shaped hand; the sight of water made me think of the mighty river which was rolling past, and long to lay my weary head and hot fiery eye-

balls down in the middle of its bed, that its cool pure billows might roll over me in peace, hiding me forever from the sight and touch of my fellow men.

I knew I was waiting for my sentence, and I longed for it to be spoken, hoping against hope that it would strike me dead. I heard voices talking aloud—each separately—yet I could not tell a word they said, although I strained my ears to hear, eager for anything which might distract for even one moment the sense of mental pain which lay like heavy molten lead on my heart.

A woman's voice spoke in the witness box.

"I do not know the prisoner. I never saw her until to-day, but I am able to give evidence which I think will exculpate her from having stolen that lace, silk, and gloves.

"I board, together with my husband, in number 8—St. Catherine street; we have lived there for two years; we are Americans; my husband's name is George Elder; a Mr. and Mrs. Smith came to the house to board several months ago—Mr. Smith is often from home; about a month ago Mrs. Smith brought into my room a piece of black silk, two packets of white gloves, and some lace collars, which appeared to me to be so exactly the same as those found in the prisoner's trunk, that I believe them to be the same.

"Mrs. Smith told me that in searching for money which she much needed, she opened her husband's desk with one of her own keys, and there found

those things ; the gloves were marked number six, and were rather small for Mrs. Smith, but notwithstanding this, she took one pair from each packet, leaving five pairs in each. instead of six, the original number ; there were five yards of silk, and she cut off one and a half yards, leaving three and a half.

"After doing this, she replaced the things in the desk she had taken them from, leaving it locked as before. I guess you will find the gloves and silk as I say."

The gloves were examined ; they were number six ; there was one pair wanting in each packet ; the silk was found to be three yards and a half long !

The witness proceeded. "On the ninth of October, the day on which that lace was found on the prisoner, it was brought into my room at six o'clock in the morning by Mrs. Smith, on the hook just as it is now ; her husband had been out the whole of the previous night, and she opened his desk in hopes of finding money, but on the top of the silk and gloves was the lace which I think you hold in your hand ; she was very angry, burst out into tears, saying she was certain there was some one in Montreal on whom he was spending his money, while she could not get enough to buy boots with ; she measured the lace with her finger, and said there were twenty yards ; she cut off three yards to make herself a collar and cuffs.

I had the lace in my hand ; it was the most beautiful lace I had seen since I came from New York ;

it would cost at least twenty dollars a yard there. I said, "If it is not too dear, I will buy enough like it to make me a collar." She offered to cut me enough from the piece, but I would not take it; she then offered to cut me a small pattern, which I accepted, so that I might get lace exactly the same; I have the pattern here; it is cut a little across, Mrs. Smith cut it so to preserve the pattern; if it is the same lace, the one will join in with the other."

The witness opened her pocket book, which she handed to a man, by whom it was in turn given to those who had the stolen things by them; my eyes followed it with hungry eagerness; I saw as well as if it had been in my hand, a piece of lace pinned on one of the pages of paper, which, in the form of a daily remembrancer, occupied part of the pocket book; it was taken from the paper and put beside the lace, the pleased murmur which ran through the court telling that it matched exactly, and fitted into the cut end of the piece on the hook, as the American lady had said it would.

She resumed—"Mrs. Smith put the lace again on the hook and locked it up in the desk, Mr. Smith came in to breakfast and went out again before twelve o'clock, the hour my husband comes in to dinner.

"I told my husband about the lace, and he bid me ask Mrs. Smith to let him see it. I did so, and when she opened the desk for the purpose, it was gone!"

The witness was asked why she did not give her evidence sooner? She replied, she had come to the

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court for amusement; Mrs. Smith was with her, and objected to the evidence being given until she left the court; the crowd was so dense, it was not until the verdict was pronounced and a few of the people went away, Mrs. Smith could force her way out.

The witness was examined as to Smith's appearance, and gave an exact description of Captain Percy, adding "He was here the whole morning; I saw him leave the court after the verdict was pronounced."

I heard a man's voice say, speaking as one would who had the power over such things, "Let him be apprehended at once." There was a slight movement among the officials, and then a commotion about the door, a voice, which seemed familiar, called aloud—

"I demand to be put in the witness box; I have evidence to give in the case of Miss St. Clare."

It was the tall chemist, Mr. Leith's clerk. He described what the reader already knows, Captain Percy having gone to his master's shop to inquire if they knew my name, and of obtaining information of his having done so in one or two other places. He then said—

"On the ninth of October, I left home to travel for my master's business; on going into my boarding house in order to pack my clothes, I saw the gentleman, who I had before seen and spoken to in the store, and who I thought must be a lover of Miss St. Clare, walk up stairs before me, and enter Miss St. Clare's room, talk to Jenny the servant for a second

or two, and then dismissing her, shut and lock the door.

"This excited my curiosity, and quietly mounting on the top of my clothes bureau, I looked into the next room through an open stove pipe hole. There I saw what convinced me in my opinion as to his being a lover of Miss St. Clare; he was kneeling in front of a large trunk, and taking from a valise he carried in his hand, a piece of black silk, some white gloves and other little things, put them into the trunk, shut and locked it; to my surprise putting the bunch of keys, with one of which he locked the trunk, into his pocket! He then poured water in the basin, threw the towel on the floor, and unlocking the door, went off, leaving his valise in Jenny's care, to be given to Mrs. Dunbar."

Mr. Clement was cross-examined; he gave a description of Captain Percy's person in nearly the same terms as Mrs. Elder, the American lady, had done; the reason he had not volunteered his evidence before, was, he only returned from his commercial tour an hour before, and on his entering the store was told by Mr. Leith who had been in court, during the trial of Miss St. Clare, that she was accused of stealing from Moir and Strong's those very articles he had seen put into her trunk.

Mr. Moir now came forward, accompanied by the boy I had seen fall from the ladder the last day I was free to walk whither I would. The boy had been very ill since he took the fit which I had seen;

had been in the country at his father's house, and only returned to his employment that morning. Mr. Moir had not seen the boy, nor known that he was at all cognizant of the theft, until a few minutes before; he had then taken a cab and driven with all speed to the court house.

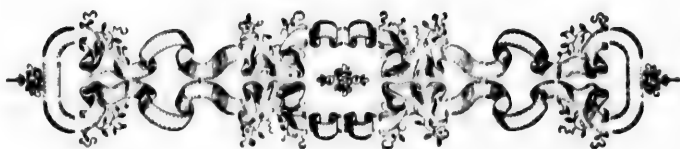
The boy's evidence was to the effect, that while turning round on the ladder to ask me some question with regard to the handkerchiefs, he saw a gentleman, whom he also described as Captain Percy, take two rolls of ribbon which lay close to each other, from the box on the counter, and as he did so, let his hand fall down close by my side. He called out *stop thief*, the next moment he had fallen in a fit, and hurt his head so severely that for a week he was unconscious of anything; he afterwards heard that some one had been arrested for stealing those ribbons, and concluded that it was the one he had seen take them.

There was a murmur of talking up there among the lawyers; in some way, I cannot remember how, I knew that I was free; there were voices talking to me; close by, a man spoke in tones softened down and low, his hand was on my arm; a woman's sweet clear voice like cheerful music; I knew not who they were; I was struggling to be free and fancied I could get out of the prisoner's dock where I stood by the front; I would not turn to the side, as they wished me to do; the sea of heads—the judge and jury—began to surge in great waves back and forth, up and down—and then on a sudden, whirl with

intense velocity round me, as I stood, my hands clinging to the front of the dock, with convulsive energy—I heard a wild rush of waters as if the great St. Lawrence was flowing with leaping waves through the house; this was the last sound which came to my ear, the last image on my brain; for weeks I knew no other.



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CHAPTER XXV.

ON the second of November, by eight in the morning, Captain Percy, accompanied by the Indian, arrived in Montreal. They were driven to a Canadian hotel in St. Joseph street, and there Captain Percy ordered a private room, with breakfast for two, served at different tables.

The Indian ate long and heartily, Captain Percy tired with a journey of four days, during which he had not been in bed, sat leisurely sipping his coffee, and looking at a morning paper; now that he was sure his wife could no longer be withheld from him, his nervous restlessness had departed.

Miss St. Clare safe in jail, the Indian here to identify him as the person who had given him charge of Tiny, he could afford to wait and rest for an hour; ere mid day he hoped to be on his way up the Ottawa, conducting Tiny to her home among Pagan savages.

His eye fell on a paragraph entitled cases before the High Court, and first on the list was The Queen versus Ruth St. Clare.

"My good luck comes all of a heap to-day," exclaimed he, slapping his hand on his leg, in a

manner he would have been shocked to have been accused of two years previous. As he sunk in the social scale his habits accommodated themselves to his position.

"I will go and see Miss Impudence consigned to the fate she so richly deserves; I hope she will get fourteen years, and I will have the happiness of informing Miss Tiny of the free board and lodging her friend is to have at the Queen's expense."

"You can lie down and have a sleep for an hour or two," said he to the Indian. "You are tired, and I have a little business to transact before I go to bring my sister from the convent," and snatching up his hat, he hurriedly left the room, taking care however to lock the door and put the key in his pocket, lest his friend Joseph, as the Canadians in St. Martin's used to call Mamondagokwa, should give him the slip.

"I will be back again in an hour or two," said Captain Percy to the landlord, as he passed the bar room on his way out, "I have locked in the Indian I brought with me to prevent his losing himself in my absence."

The landlord nodded acquiescence, and his guest hurried towards the court house, fearful lest he should lose the sight of the misery he had caused, and which he now hoped to gloat over in his triumph.

The reader is aware of the way he took to show the poor prisoner at the bar that he rejoiced in her misery. He saw Abby there with her American friend, but he kept in a part of the crowd where she

could not see him; he meant to go to his boarding house before he left Montreal, in case his long expected letter had arrived, he wished to tell Abby he had only just come into town, and that his business would take him away again for some time, but if his letter was awaiting him, then he would bring her to New York in a few days.

The whole of the evidence was exactly what he could have wished, the sentence "Guilty" came in due course, and perfectly satisfied now that he believed the face that had troubled him all the long summer and fall, must be hid in the penitentiary for at least seven years, he left the court-house rejoicing.

On his way in search of the Indian, Captain Percy called at the post office.

"Yes. There was a letter for him, a registered letter, which had arrived by this day's mail from England; it had been sent to his address half an hour ago."

This was good news. It was the long looked for letter which was to bring him a hundred pounds. How pleased he was to hear this. With what different feelings he would handle that bill to the sullen way in which he used to receive from Tiny four times the amount, as she gave it to him from her mother's letter.

He would have liked to go and receive his letter now, but he knew it was still in the postman's hands, who must have refused to leave it at the house. Abby was at the court. No one could sign the

register book and receive the letter, except himself or Mrs. Smith ; his letters were addressed " Captain Percy, care Mrs. Smith." In his far off English home, Mrs. Smith was understood to be the person with whom he boarded.

It was an annoyance, but the word *Guilty* had put him in such good humor, this small inconvenience did not trouble him.

"When will the postman return here with the letter ? I am anxious to have it as soon as possible."

"He will not bring it here again ; he will call at your place on his return, as he comes down the street ; if you do not go home until one o'clock it will be waiting you."

This would do—his plan was formed, his brain was fertile in such things ; He would leave Tiny in the cab a few doors off in charge of the cab-man ; he had all along intended to put her under the influence of chloroform, " to prevent " as he sapiently observed to himself, " any unpleasant demonstration by Mistress Tiny on finding herself again leaving Montreal with all the pleasant reminiscences of her former seclusion from the constraint of civilized life, fresh in her mind ;" thus then she would wait his return, while he secured his precious letter, and ere midnight they would be many miles from Montreal.

He now made the best of his way to St. Joseph street, where in the little Canadian Hotel he found the Indian still fast asleep. Joseph was soon aroused and made to understand where he was, and what he

was wanted to do. While they are on their way to the Convent, we shall introduce our reader again to the tall stranger who so suddenly accosted Captain Percy at the Indian's willow pit.

The tall stranger was in Montreal, walking about streets he had not seen for fifteen years, wondering as he looked at the transformation which everywhere met his eye; the simple wooden buildings he had seen when last here were gone, their places occupied by handsome stone edifices, each to his eye seeming some public building; the polished granite pillars, with their carved base and capitol, rivalling those which adorn the cities of old Europe.

"I will rest here a month or two," said the stranger mentally, as he walked along the streets full of unknown faces. "Write home and wait for the answer which will tell me all that has happened at Rockgirtisle these many long years; I dare say they think me dead; I should have gone home to see them long ago, yet perhaps it is better as it is; I am bringing home what in Scotland will be considered almost fabulous riches, how glad my father will be when he reads the name subscribing my letter; I can see the tears in my mother's eyes as she reads the words which tell that Reddy is alive and coming home. And pretty Tiny and little fat Artty, the dear little fellow, how he used to scream for joy when I tossed him around my head."

"Yes, I must hear they are all alive and well

before I go home; it would be no home for me if there was one missing; how strange that in all the past years the thought of this never troubled me as it does now; I would give all my hard won gold to be at home and to clasp my father's hand, and hear my mother's voice say 'Reddy,' as in the old time; it makes me shake like a girl when I think that instead of soft words, a bright welcome, I may walk through empty halls echoing to my own tread alone."

A week passed by; the stranger had hired a furnished house above Sherbrooke street, on the brow of the mountain, the residence of a gentleman who had gone to make the tour of Europe with his wife and daughters.

Reginald Gordon, for the stranger was no other than Lady Gordon's eldest son, so long unheard from, unheard of, that for long years his name had been spoken with a hushed voice, and the lineaments of his face recalled with the pained heart and unrest, with which we think of those we shall never see again.

He had sent a cablegram and two long loving letters addressed to a father who was sleeping the sleep which knows no waking.

He was in front of the Convent of The Holy Cross, looking up at the great building, and thinking what a terrible punishment it would be to himself, who led and so loved a free life in the open air, to be shut up within those dull dead looking walls, the ponderous gate, with its great iron studs, which

seemed too heavy to turn on hinges, however strong. Little did he think as he looked, what deep interest those great thick walls, that enormous gate, had for him. That his life of travel and exile had all tended to one point, his return home had been hindered from year to year, because he was needed there, within that convent, that day, that very hour!

As he stood in front of the gate a postern door suddenly opened, and a gentleman, dressed in the uniform of an officer of the guards, accompanied by a man servant, came out from the convent.

Both gentlemen stared at each other; they were tall men, each of them over six feet, large and strongly built.

A memory from his young life came like a tone of half forgotten music over the heart of Reginald Gordon, as he looked on the face of the officer, and walking up to him, he said, holding up his hand—

“Will you shake hands with me, stranger?”

The officer stared as he replied—

“Why should I do so?”

“Because it is not every day you meet a man of your own size. I do not think I have spoken to one so large as myself since I last saw Hugh and Harry Seaton; if my memory is not playing tricks with me, I am speaking to one or the other now.”

“You are indeed speaking to Hugh Seaton,” replied the officer, gazing with wondering eyes in the face of the one who had accosted him so uncere-

moniously, and knew his name in a land where he was an entire stranger, and had only arrived a few days before with his troop ship. "And as you have the advantage of me, and know who I am, it is but fair you should tell me who it is who knows Hugh Seaton's face in this far off Canada, so many miles across the sea from our Scottish home. Your speech tells me you are my countryman?"

"So you dont know me, Hugh?" My hunter's life must have changed me more than your soldiering has altered you; you have quite forgotten big Reddy who used to fight your battles for you."

"Reginald Gordon! it cannot be"—said Major Seaton, his face expressing surprise, hope, fear, as each emotion alternately swayed his mind. "It is too good news to be true—and yet it must be so—yes, it is you, Reddy—your mother's Seaton face—where have you been all these long years? it was surely God who sent you here."

"I hope so. I have still enough left of my mother's teaching to have no wish to go where God does not send me. Now before I answer your question as to where I have been all these long years, you must tell me when you last saw and heard of my father and mother, "pretty Tiny" as we used to call her, and little Artty, and Marion, and old James Forest the game-keeper, and every body at home. I am this far on my way to see them—I wrote long letters home a week ago, and telegraphed by that wonderful cable this morning to my father."

Here was a task for Hugh Seaton, with his large, loving, tender heart to perform; he well remembered Reddy Gordon, the boy, petting and feeding a sick Newfoundland dog for weeks, leading his horse ten miles through muddy country roads, in rain and darkness, because he had discovered that the animal was slightly footsore; he was now a strong man, with all his affections grown stronger, with his strong manhood; how was he to bear being told that the father, whose hand he longed to grasp, and to whom he had telegraphed that morning, in the fond faith that the living man might even now be reading the lightning carried words, the loving heart rejoicing, "my son was dead and is alive again," that this father had twelve years before, in the prime of life, in ripe manhood, been laid down where his forefathers slept, in the mausoleum at Rockgirtisle; and his gentle mother, the one whom as a boy he loved the best, that she too, o'erwearied with the strife, had folded her pale hands on her breast, and closed her tired eyes on this earth for evermore; and worse than all, a thousand fold worse than death in any shape, that Tiny, the light of the old home, the darling of the old house, that she, the prey of a sordid villain for years, worse used by him than the veriest scoundrel uses his dog, had been brought to the convent they now stood by, to fill a pauper's bed, and was every moment in danger of being again carried off by the wretch who called her his wife, that to hide his crime of bigamy, she might be again immured among

savages, perhaps to make his wretched existence more safe, a grave made, which on a certain day and hour he had doomed her to fill.

"I have a long story to tell you, Reginald—Tiny is in that building; she is threatened with a fate worse than death by him who swore before God to protect her from all ill. I have tried in vain to save her from her brutal husband, who, we know, arrived in Montreal by this morning's train from Ottawa, accompanied by the man who placed her here; wealth or power are alike unable to save her from his clutches; naught but the tie of blood will avail; she is sunk in a lethargy, so deep, that she is unable to raise her voice in her own defence; half an hour since I was told 'bring her brother here, we will deliver her to him,' and so God has sent you, whom we all thought dead, to save her."

"Where is my father? I cannot understand you; Tiny here, ill, and in danger of her life! what can be the meaning of all this? Explain yourself."

Major Seaton rung the convent bell. The grating was opened; he said a few words, and was at once admitted by the postern door.

"Come here, Reginald," said Major Seaton, "I will do my best to tell you all, but it cannot be told out there. That young man is a brother of Marion's; he was sent to Canada by the same Providence that sent you." As he spoke, he signified by an inclination of his head, that he spoke of the lad who was with him when he so fortunately encountered the stranger of the willow pit.

With a few words to the prioress, who Major Seaton had asked to see, they were admitted into the reception room, the Prioress saying to Major Seaton, as they entered—

“Father Paul is in the chapel and will remain for an hour or two, so as to be here when Smith comes.”

“I have little to say that will give you pleasure Reginald,” Major Seaton began, as soon as the nun had left them. “I have only to tell of trouble and sorrow, but your presence here will effect so much good that the knowledge of this should amply compensate for the pain which my tidings will cause.”

“Say on, Hugh. I already know that Tiny is here; if you tell me my father and mother and Artty are safe and well, I will not grieve much, although Rockgirtisle Castle be under the sea instead of on the rocky height above it, or the old house at Leith, where we were all born and bred, be burned to the ground.”

“Rockgirtisle Castle and Hall both stand as fast as ever, and to human eyes they look as if they would last as long as the water of Leith flows to the sea; but the loving eyes that first looked on you there, and the hands which grasped yours while the fond heart said ‘good-bye, good-bye my son,’ have thrown off forever the sorrows of this life, and lain down to sleep.”

The tale is told, the hard task over. Reginald Gordon knows that he will never more see either father or mother's face, until the dead, small and great, stand

before God ; that the long letters which he intended should speak so fondly, and which when he awoke in the silent night he thought over, forming each sentence with such love and care, that the written words, the blessed messengers, might speak from heart to heart, and yet when the morrow came with its daylight, the song of birds, and men's hearty kind voices, the letter was put off until to-morrow and to-morrow ; and now, alas ! that to-morrow could never come.

He knows also how Bertram Percy came to blight Margaret Gordon's young life, in Scottish parlance "to cast the glamour o'er her," sometimes we are almost tempted to believe there are such things, when we see a young and gentle girl leaving a luxurious home, of which she is the glory and the darling, to follow a man 'until death do them part,' who has little else to recommend him, save a facility of whispering honeyed words, the power to shine amid dance and song.

Reginald Gordon stood a silent listener, with compressed lip and hardened brow, while he was told how "pretty Tiny's" soft peach cheek paled, and her downcast eye told the unrest of heart which so surely came when the sad conviction forced itself upon her, that her husband, the one she had married, *malgré* all her kith and kin, was a gamester, a blackleg, and at last, woe, woe, a low drinking cheat, the companion of men who would not dare defile by their presence, the threshold of her mother's house.

How in hopes that her love might win him from

his low ways, she had gone with him to India, how the lying villain had from hence written an account of her death, and come to Scotland himself to corroborate the tale, and try to extort money from Lady Gordon for the possession of his children.

Of his coming a second time, when he was aware of her ladyship's death, accompanied by a woman, whose name was entered in the guest book at Kay's Hotel as Mrs. Percy, when all the while his true wife was the inmate of an Indian's hut, buried in the wild bush land of Canada.

And then came the startling account of the wonderful assurance which was given to Lady Gordon, and which never for one moment failed her, that Tiny was alive, prompting her in life to go to distant India to find her child, and on her deathbed to make provision for another going in her stead.

Of the almost miraculous discovery made in Kay's Hotel through the woman Captain Percy called his wife, of Tiny having been first brought to New-York and again to Montreal, where the woman was told she had died.

And last of all, how Major Seaton himself had come out with his regiment only two days previous, to find on going to the address of Miss St. Clare, who had been sent out in accordance with Lady Gordon's will to search for Tiny, that she had left her boarding house three weeks previously, and that the people of the house either could not or would not tell what had become of her.

Of his having only that morning met Sandy Mitchell at the Bonaventure Railroad station, who pointed out to him Captain Percy, accompanied by an Indian, who had just arrived by the train, learning at the same time that Mrs. Percy was alive, and was now in the Convent of The Holy Cross, and that Sandy Mitchell was employed there, saw and spoke to her every day.

Of his having gone at once to the Convent, and being told by the prioress, that Captain Percy *alias* Mr. Smith was expected every day, to claim the lady now in the Convent, whom Miss St. Clare and Sandy Mitchell called Mrs. Percy, but who had been placed there by the Indian as of the name of Smith, and that when Smith came back, accompanied by the Indian, Joseph Chartreux, they would be obliged to deliver the invalid up to him, unless one who could prove himself a brother or some near relative, was there to claim her.

For some minutes after Major Seaton ceased speaking, Sir Reginald Gordon sat as if stupified by the various emotions to which the sad recital he had been listening to had given rise; at last suddenly starting up, he said—

“That unchanged villain may be here at any moment, and these ladies of The Holy Cross will no doubt require some stronger testimony than yours who have brought me here to prove to them I am the person you say I am; if you will carry a message to the nearest telegraph office, I will send to Lachine

for Sir George Simpson ; he will, I know, come here immediately, and his identification of me will be sufficient ; I dare not leave this myself until I take my sister with me."

He had scarcely ceased speaking, when Monsieur Paul, the priest, entered the receiving room.

" Mr. Gordon."

" Priest Paul."

Came simultaneously in accents equally suggestive of surprise and pleasure from the lips of both gentlemen, who recognized each other at once, having twice, in an interval of eleven years, been thrown together, first for several weeks, the last time for upwards of three months.

" You have come here most opportunely," said Sir Reginald, who we must now call by the title, which although his, was unclaimed, unthought of, for so many long years. " I am here to claim possession of my sister, and to save her from a bigamist, who once had a right to call her his wife ; you of all men can best testify to the superior of this Convent that I am the one I say I am, Sir Charles Gordon of Rockgirtisle's son, and Reginald Gordon the hunter of the far west."

" I can indeed do all you say, and it is with feelings of gratitude to God and the blessed Virgin I see you here, and listen to you calling the unfortunate lady upstairs your sister. Since the first day I saw her I was deeply interested in her, and knew she was in a false position ; this interest was increased sevenfold when I heard Miss St. Clare say that she was the

daughter of Lady Gordon of Rockgirtisle ; but latterly, since I became aware of the unfortunate position in which Miss St. Clare has placed herself, particularly after I heard that Mr. Morton of Edinburgh had been here, and stopped the Mining Company's Bank from supplying her with more money, I began to fear that her motive in representing the invalid to be Mrs. Percy, was what Smith said it was, a deep design on the part of an adventuress to impose a stranger who bore a likeness to the Gordon family, upon them, as one whom they mourned as dead."

"Of what is Miss St. Clare accused? Mr. Morton has stopped her money supplies! Impossible, he dare not do so," exclaimed Major Seaton. "Robert Morton has never been in Canada, and if he was, he has no power whatever over that money."

"Miss St. Clare is in jail accused of shop theft. Mr. Morton was in Montreal over three weeks since, and neither saw nor communicated in any way with Miss St. Clare, but went to the Scottish Mining Company's Bank, and ordered the cashier to honor no more of the young lady's drafts."

"I had a letter from Robert Morton dated in Liverpool, exactly sixteen days back," said Major Seaton. "He had then never been in Canada, and had no intention of coming here. Captain Percy is at the bottom of all this, I have not the least doubt; he is capable of any villainy, and unfortunately his head is quick to devise evil. I wish from my heart he was still in the army, that he might be court-martialed

and lashed before being given over to the civil authorities. I myself"——

The door of the little entrance chamber opened, and Robert Gordon, accompanied by Robert Morton, entered the room !

Hugh Seaton's face became radiant with joy as he saw them enter ; the clever lawyer, the man whom he in his heart believed to have the most acute brain in Scotland, one too who loved Tiny as a very brother ; if any one could foil Captain Percy with his own weapons of the law, he knew that one was Robert Morton.

And Artty, the boy who had been the pet and plaything of all Tiny's years of girlhood, the one of all others, who, by leading her thoughts to the time when there were no troubled waters in her life, would be most likely to bring peace to her over-charged mind and brain ; if he had the choice of every one in broad Scotland to come to Canada at that moment, these were the two he would have chosen.

The soldier and lawyer met as men do who have a perfect trust in each other.

There is naught in all this world so strong as the tie of blood. " Brothers are brothers evermore." The boy and the grown man gazed each in the face of the other for a second or two, and then the elder, going up to the boy, placed a hand on either of his shoulders as if he would lift him by his arm, saying as he did so " Change, Artty."

This was a sort of pass word, by which, when

Artty was a boy of six years, Reginald used to intimate to the child that he was going to toss him round his head and set him on his shoulders; the words, the voice, and action were magical. Artty was a happy child again at Rockgirtisle, carried about on Reddy's shoulders; his arms were round the tall man in a moment, while he called aloud in accents which thrilled with joy—

“Reddy, Reddy, my big brother!”

A loud ring at the convent gate. Why does Father Paul hurry from the little vestibule, his lips white as with some deep emotion, and why does the hot blood rush to Hugh Seaton's face and his black eyes flash fire? Is there some subtle fluid pervading the atmosphere which tells men when danger, or an enemy—one they hate, is near?

Father Paul motioned to the lay nun who usually attended the grating to allow him take her place, and stepping up, opened it himself, seeing as he did so Captain Percy and the Indian on the other side.

“I come for my sister,” said the former, in a rude impetuous voice. “Send her out to me—a carriage waits to bring her away—you know this man; you saw him the morning he brought her here.”

“I know the Indian, Joseph Chartreux, well, but my knowing him or he having brought the invalid lady here cannot make me sure that *you* have a right to remove her from the protection of the good nuns with whom she is placed, and they, not I, must decide if she is able to bear the journey or not.”

Captain Percy's reply was characteristic of the man—

"The woman is a Protestant; if she is not given up to me within the hour, I will bring a mob round your Convent who will burn it to the ground."

The priest opened the postern door, and signing to both Captain Percy and the Indian to come in, admitted them, and then carefully closing and bolting the door, preceded the others into the entrance chamber.

Captain Percy gazed around on the occupants of the little receiving room, with mingled feelings of astonishment, rage, and latent fear. Major Seaton, Mr. Morton, and Tiny's brother, the three men he most hated on this earth. The tall stranger he had met at the Indian's willow pit! He asked himself the question, "what could bring these men together, and of all other places, in the entrance chamber of the Convent where Mrs. Percy was an hospital patient, and he himself must have been expected, day by day, for a fortnight back?"

He needed not to be told that these men being met together, augured no good for him; he saw he would have a battle to fight single handed against them all, but he would do it manfully and unscrupulously; he knew before-hand he would have the worst of it now, but he swore a great oath that he should have his revenge deep and life long.

As the priest, accompanied by Captain Percy and the Indian, entered the room, Mr. Morton said a few

words to Reginald Gordon, who at once stepped forward, and addressing Captain Percy, said—

"Ha! my friend of the Indian's willow pit, what has brought you here?"

"What is your business?" was the reply, with a rude stare.

"When I tell you that I am Sir Reginald Gordon of Rockgirtisle, brother of the lady whose hard fate made her your wife, you will understand my interest in knowing what motive you have for visiting a cloistered convent, where she now resides."

Captain Percy saw what he at first suspected, that they knew Mrs. Percy was here, and would if possible prevent his taking possession of her. He would brave it to the last, however; they could know nothing of Abby, that was impossible; for all else he must trust to his wits.

"I know no such person," said he, "as Sir Reginald Gordon, but I suppose this is of a piece with many other stories which have been attempted to be foisted on me. Admitting however that you are what you say, what right does that give you to take a supervision of my actions? Ha! I do remember now of hearing of a lost brother of my wife's, a ne'er-do-well, as your mother used to call you; so you have turned up just at the nick of time, to help Seaton, Morton and company in keeping my wife from me by brute force, they knowing that right and law are on my side. I want to have nothing to say to you."

Turning to the priest, he continued in the same breath, "Pray bring me to Mrs. Smith."

"This will not do," said Sir Reginald, before the priest had time to reply. "You are a bigamist, living with a second wife in Montreal; do you imagine that I will allow my sister see or speak to such an one? make the best use of your time in escaping from Montreal; if to-morrow's sun finds you here, I will have you arrested for the crime of which you are guilty, and all the influence I am possessed of, will be used to have you confined in the penitentiary for life."

"It is a lie, an infernal lie," thundered out Captain Percy, his throat and face dilated, and purple with rage. "I never was married except to Margaret Gordon. I will leave this to her own evidence; my wife is as anxious to be with me as I am to have her in my home once more, and if she is not at once given up to me, it will be at the peril of those who keep her."

"If you are not married," broke in Mr. Morton, "why did you enter the name of the woman you brought to Edinburgh last Spring on Kay's Hotel book, as your wife?"

"I never did,—you lie and you know you do; that lady was the wife of a friend of mine, who I brought to Edinburgh, that she might meet her husband, and accompany him to Ireland."

"Perhaps you can as readily explain your motive for writing to my mother an account of my sister's death, and coming to Edinburgh in mourning, with a lie in your right hand, to corroborate the falsehood in person," said Sir Reginald.

"I had reasons for doing so, which I do not hold myself bound to explain to any one."

"Possibly the same reason induced you to place the lady in question in the hut of a savage for upwards of two years, and also to tell her that her children were dead, and to offer a bribe to Joinnette, the farmer at Isle Jesus, that he might take her into his house and leave her to die of neglect," said Robert Morton, looking him quietly and steadily in the face as he spoke.

The villain saw that he was trapped on every side ; he half expected that Abby would next rise up to confront him. With a face livid and swollen with rage, he stuttered out, prefixing his words with a horrible oath—

"It is a conspiracy ; it is a conspiracy to defraud my wife and myself out of the house and money left by my mother-in-law to my wife, but if there is law or justice in the land, you shall all be punished as you deserve. For the moment he forgot Major Seaton's presence, and added in a loud voice and blustering manner, "I shall teach one and all of you what it is to slander an officer of the guards, in order to take his wife from him by force, and put her fortune into the pockets of sordid needy brothers."

"Do not talk of yourself as an officer in any of Her Majesty's regiments," said Major Seaton. "You are perfectly aware that you were dismissed the service three years ago."

"And you shall be dismissed for lying against the

character of your brother officer as soon as my letter to the Horse Guards is received," he blustered out, as he strode from the room, elbowing the priest on one side and the Indian on the other, in going out, and making the vestibule ring with the slam he gave the door.

Once inside the cab which he had brought in full expectation of carrying away Tiny, he gave vent to his rage, gnashing his teeth and stamping his feet, until the cabman, attracted by the latter noise, turned round to know "if the gentleman wanted anything?"

"I want you to drive quickly, not at a snail's space," was the surly response.

In a few minutes Captain Percy was in St. Catherine street, thundering at the door of his boarding house.

On being admitted, he stalked straight to his own room, the door of which, usually shut, he found wide open.

As he entered, he stared in blank astonishment at the scene which met his eye, drawers wide open, wardrobe ditto both empty, his own desk, of which he carefully kept the key, was wide open, the letters and papers it contained lying in the greatest confusion, some of them on the table, the two checks which he received from the Grand Trunk railway clerk, and by which alone he could claim Abby's second trunk, or what was of more consequence, his own, containing all his best clothes, and which he kept in his desk, were nowhere to be seen!

What could it all mean? he had left Abby, together

with her American friend, two hours before, in full dress in the Court House; he knew her too well to suppose she would return home until she had heard the very last case tried; the only conclusion he could come to was that the landlady, tired of empty promises instead of money for his own and Abby's board, had put her threat into execution, of seizing his own and his wife's effects.

He rang the bell violently.

"Where is Mrs. Sugarspoon? tell her to come here directly, I want to speak with her."

"Mrs. Sugarspoon and the four young ladies is all gone out for the day, out a pleasuring to Chambly, gone by the six o'clock boat this morning, and a basket full of sandwiches and bread, rolls and hard boiled eggs, and a pot of"—

"A pot of thunder," exclaimed Captain Percy, rudely interrupting the girl.

"Oh! no, Sir, a pot"—

"Where is Mrs. Smith?"

"I dont know, Sir. She came home about twelve; yes, just twelve, for the postman was at the door, and he always comes at twelve; she sent me for a cab. and went off again in about half an hour, and took her Saratoga trunk, and her hand valise, and her band box, and her parasol, leastways her silk umbrella with her."

"Did she say where she was going?"

"She did not, Sir, but just shook hands with me

when she was on the doorstep, quite genteel and like a lady as it was easy seen she was, and put a dollar bill in my hand, and me never brushed a pair of boots for her, for she always wore them boots as is cleaned with paint, which I brushed many the pair for gentlemen as never gave me a *trente-sous*."

Captain Percy did not take the hint the girl wished to convey, but instead, slammed the door in her face. She had scarcely reached the staircase, when he called to her to come back.

"Did you say the postman came to-day?"

"Yes, Sir, just as Mrs. Percy came to the door he arrived with a letter for her, and I gave her the pen out of the dining room to sign the book, for it was a registered letter, and she said she was real glad to get it."

"You are sure she did not leave the letter with any one for me? It was my letter."

"No, Sir, begging your pardon, it was not. I had it in my hand when she signed the postman's book, and I read the direction "Captain Percy, care Mrs. Smith," and Mrs. Smith said it was a letter for her brother and herself, and she opened it in the parlor and did not take time to read it, but she showed me two fifty pounds as was in the letter, as I think she said her mamma sent to her, and says"——

Captain Percy was again inside his own room and the door shut. "Confound her," exclaimed he, as he stamped up and down the room, "she's off, and my hundred pounds in her hands; I must telegraph in

all directions to bring her back, the impudent faggot, to dare to open my letters."

He put his hand in his pocket and pulled out his purse, that he might ascertain what money there was left, and found to his dismay there was not quite a dollar!

He opened his dressing case, and had just taken therefrom a few ornaments, the only things he now had which he could convert into money, when the door opened, and Mr. Sharpquill entered, very quietly, very cautiously. "My dear fellow, what keeps you here? have you not heard that the police are on your track?"

Captain Percy stared; the perspiration came out in great drops on face and neck; he mentally asked himself, had Sir Reginald Gordon put his threat into execution? and then turning to the lawyer—

"What—what for?" he stammered out. "Who is my—accuser—Sir Reginald Gordon?"

"No," said the lawyer, with a slight elevation of his eyebrows. "How could you come in contact with Sir Reginald Gordon? such small fry as you and I don't cross his path, why man he's one of the big bugs of the country; an income of at least fifty thousand dollars a year; entertains General Sir Fenwick Williams, General and Lady Sarah Lindsay and all the other great English folk; that's the deuce with this country as well as your own, all that a fellow like you or me will be allowed to do or say to the like of Sir Reginald is to give him a hat when we

see him pass in his carriage and pair. No, it's not Sir Reginald Gordon, but it's the Queen's advocate, who accuses you of shop lifting, on the testimony of an American woman who lodges here, and to whom Mrs. Smith shewed the lace Miss St. Clare was accused of stealing. She had a piece in her pocket book your wife cut off for a pattern ; she told the length of it to an inch ; she had seen the silk and the gloves and told the length of the one, the number of the others, all right ; there were two other witnesses against you, but the American was the worst ; if they get hold of you, it's a fourteen years' case."

A loud rap at the outer door. Mr. Sharpquill looked cautiously out at the side of the window.

"It's them ! into the wardrobe with you."

Captain Percy stepped into the wardrobe which was a large one, Mr. Sharpquill shut and locked it, and put the key in his pocket, then running swiftly but quietly down stairs, met the servant girl on her way to the door. With one hand he touched her shoulder, the other he pressed on his lips to enjoin silence, and putting a half dollar in the girl's hand, whispered in her ear—

"Say what I say."

The girl opened the door, while Mr. Sharpquill appeared suddenly to be deeply interested in the useful occupation of smoothing the pile of his hat ; the work was one of superogation, seeing the pile was completely worn off, in fact had been so for the last year, but being occupied so, looked as if the man

was neat and particular about his wearables, (which however was not the fact), and then standing thus with his face to the row of hat pins, would naturally make the policeman think that the gentleman was just on his way out.

The door open, the policemen entered. Mr. Sharpquill opened his eyes wide, evincing the utmost surprise.

"What's up?" inquired he. "You dont want me, do you?" said with a self satisfied smile, which told the beholders this was simply impossible.

"Not exactly, Sir, but we would like to see a gentleman who boards here, a low sized, fair haired man by the name of Smith, or perhaps half a dozen *alias*'"—

"Why! what has he done? A drunken row, eh?"

"No, Sir," replied the policeman, assuming an air of great importance, "more than that by a long score, a grave crime, I may say two crimes at the very least, shop-lifting in the first case, and next imputing the same to another; its a fourteen year's case, I'll answer."

"Whew!"—a long whew.—"I wish you may catch him; I have always had my suspicions of that cove; his pretence and importance are insufferable; a married man with a good looking wife, yet whenever he had a chance, trying to put his fingers in every other person's affairs, going out to walk with young ladies who would have seen him far enough; I thought there was something wrong; he came home

in a great hurry about an hour ago ; I think it's an hour past, Susan ?"

"Yes, Sir, it's all that."

"Up stairs he ran, and left the cab he came in, at the front door, pulled out a great Saratoga trunk down stairs—out at the back door—and off in a cab with his wife ; calling to Susan "I'm going to see my wife off ; I'll be back in ten minutes, the cab can wait for me."

"An by gorra, its waiting for him yet," said the policeman. "The man's at the door quite contented sleeping on the box."

"That beats Harry," continued the policeman. "Let me see his room, Susan ; perhaps I'll get something there in the shape of letters or memoranda that 'll help us to bag our man ; such cattle are very fond of putting their thoughts on paper."

"Come on, I'll let you see the room ; I want to see the fun," said Sharpquill, as if he really enjoyed the thing. "I dont want to see the poor nigger trapped, but I confess I think he does deserve a few months for his impudence in making up to girls who could get better than him."

Sharpquill had gulled the policeman ; it was not the first time he had done so to others of the same craft in a wider field. They went upstairs to the room where Captain Percy was locked in the wardrobe, the policeman saying to himself, "Smith has been interfering with this chap's girl, and he feels his toes sore."

"Ah ha!" said the man, as he entered, and saw the confusion which reigned in Captain Percy's room. "It's pretty evident this nest has been forsaken, look at his letters all lying about, I'll take them with me, he may have missed something in his hurry; here, Thompson, take this desk, pack all them papers into it, and ye can take this box too," said he, pushing the dressing case from which Captain Percy had already taken the few valuables it contained, towards his confrère.

The man looked round, perhaps to see if there was anything else worth taking, perhaps in case Smith might be hiding in some out of the way place; he tried to open the wardrobe; "this is locked, has he left anything here?" said he, addressing the girl.

"Oh! no," said Sharpquill, "that is a cupboard which is always kept full of preserves and other stores, the mistress keeps the key of it always in her pocket."

"So," replied the policeman, giving it a push as he passed by, "it's like that, it's pretty steady on its pins, is there any bottles in it, Biddy?"

"No, Sir, Mrs. Sugarspoon is temperance."

"If Smith had been temperance too, it's as like as not I would not be after him. Good-bye, Biddy."

Susan tossed her head with an offended air, and as she afterward told Mr. Sharpquill, "was very glad that ere himpudent fellow didn't catch Mr. Smith; a good face he had to change my name as was a sight better than his own."

The foiled policeman and Sharpquill left the house together, the latter returning however in a short time, bringing with him in a cab a large bundle, from which, after releasing Captain Percy from his uncomfortable quarters, he took a priest's robe, dress and hat, a dye for the skin, a black wig, and a silk umbrella.

Having instructed his friend in the mystery of the skin dye, and in the necessity there was for removing the few hirsute fair hairs which he fondly called his moustache, the wig was properly adjusted by the help of its Indian rubber straps, the dress and hat put on in priestly style, and then Mr. Sharpquill sent Susan to the next grocery to purchase a bottle of beer, while in her absence, he and the Jesuit priest departed, the maid of all work being wholly ignorant of the transformation in Mr. Smith's appearance.

The worthy couple passed down Bleury street, through Great St. James and Notre Dame Streets, the pretended priest receiving more than one bow of respect in passing along; arrived in Jacques-Cartier square, they sought the chambers of Mr. Sharpquill, which chambers consisted of a dirty office, containing two desks, two stools, a set of dusty shelves, on which were ostentatiously placed some law books and a few dilapidated tin boxes, supposed to contain valuable papers.

On entering. Mr. Sharpquill carefully adjusted the ticket outside the door which informed his clients that he had "gone to dinner and would be back in

an hour," and then locking the door inside, seated himself on one of the high three legged stools, motioning to Captain Percy to take the other.

"Now," said he, "You can tell me what you wish me to do for you; you got pretty well through the streets just now, but it will be as well not to take the air again until seven or eight o'clock. The train for the west starts at eight forty; it will be dark before then, and darkness is a valuable friend when we feel tired or nervous, and dont wish to receive the attentions of our friends or the public."



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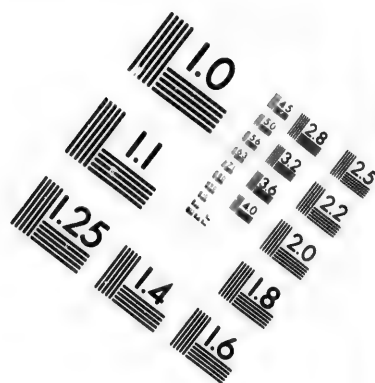
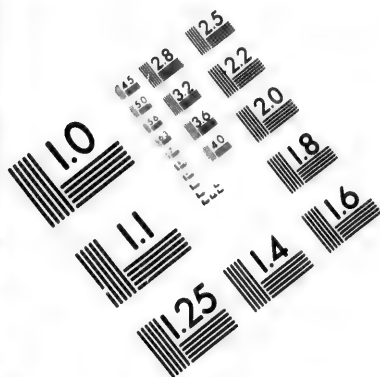
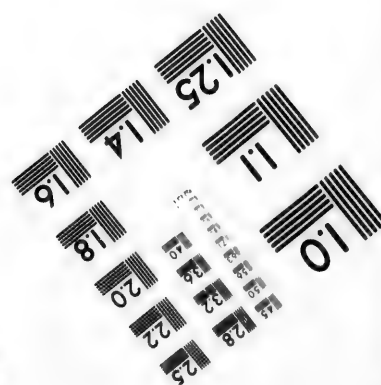
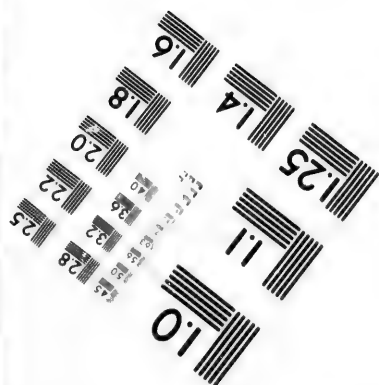
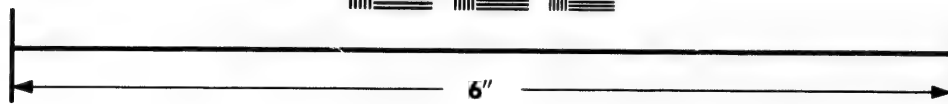
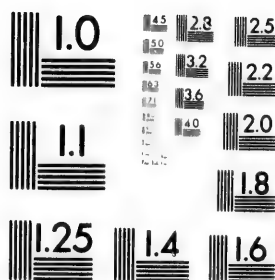


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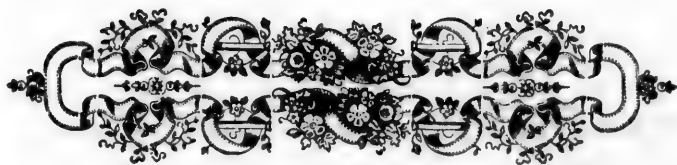
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FALLS OF MONTMORENCY IN WINTER



CHAPTER XXVI.

I WAS conscious of existence, a very painful existence and little else ; there was an elderly woman with a very white apron always beside my bed, who spoke kindly to me, and tried to make me take medicine and food which I never would take, and I sometimes saw Mrs. Balfour trying to make me more comfortable with her kindly cheerful face, and more than once I saw a pale white face I seemed to remember as I looked at the face alone, but the black dress trimmed with crape when I looked at it, soon dimmed all the memory of the beautiful white face.

But these, the woman with the white apron, Mrs. Balfour, and the beautiful white face, were only seen sometimes ; there was a great sea of faces waving up and down, back and forth, that was always there ; the awful countenances of the Judge and the jurymen were ever before me, coming between me and the pattern of roses on the wall paper, between me and the light from the window, ever, ever there ; during my waking hours, in my sleep, all the same ; they were never absent.

They all spoke, but they only said one word ; the

sea of faces all spoke it; the judge and the jurymen all spoke it so clearly, not loud, but deep, distinct, and clear—

“Guilty!”——

The sea of heads would open their mouths and say, each looking at me with serious cold eyes.

“Guilty!”——

The jury would reply.

“Guilty!”——

The judge repeated, and the sentence seemed to be just,—“Guilty.”

And worst of all Captain Percy would point at me with his hooked finger, and in the same cold voice as the others, but more bitter, say—

“Guilty!”——

One day I awoke from a long sleep; the white beautiful face was looking at me, my hand in her's, but the sea of faces came between me and her face; I was stronger than usual, and I told her of my torment.

I closed my eyes, although I could not shut out one of the faces by doing so, nor could I shut my ears to the terrible word “Guilty!”

I heard the beautiful white face speak to another, and tell all I had told her.

She came again in a few minutes, and I was lifted from my bed, and the beautiful white face and myself were in a carriage, driving away from the sea of faces, and we came into a fine house, and

into a large room where there was a balcony, and the sunshine came pouring in, and outside, the green fir trees and the feathery cedar, waved their fresh arms, although every other tree was bare and dead.

And there I saw the beautiful white face nearly all the time, and the sea of faces never came again.

For a week after I lost consciousness in the court house, I was an inmate of Doctor Balfour's hospitable house, watched over tenderly by his wife, waited on with all the love and care she could have given had I been her heart's best sister, but the room had a north light, the house was too still, my fevered brain was left without the sunshine or the sounds of nature, to wean it from feeding on itself; I was removed to Sir Reginald Gordon's house on the slope of the Mountain, where the morning sun came to me with its first rays, where I heard the peacock scream for rain and the house fowl boding day, the cattle low, and the hound bay the moon, where the trees before my window waved and tossed their feathery arms with every wind that blew.

And ere a week was spent there I was well, and felt all my old strength and energy come back, and longed with nervous unrest to be home again, back in Scotland; not in my grandfather's home, I did not think of that, but in my own little room in the old house at Leith.

I was not needed where I was, the doctor would not hear of Mrs. Percy going home until the beginning of December, but she was well in body and

mind, walking about the house and the conservatory, riding out with her brothers every day, receiving visits, and (so said Mr. Morton) becoming more like herself than when he first saw her in the private room at the convent, (which after they knew who she was the nuns provided for her), he thought she ever would be again.

Mrs. Percy spoke every hour of her children, and her heart yearned to be with them, but it seemed to me as if she dreaded to go home and find her mother's chair empty.

One day I surprised her weeping bitterly, a small portrait of her mother, painted in ivory, which Mr. Robert Gordon had brought from Scotland with him, in her hand.

She dried her tears, saying, "It is so wicked to feel thus, but I never thought of mamma's dying, she was so strong, I had such full faith, ever, ever, in her being the first to welcome me when I went home; Miss St. Clare, do you know if my children could come here, I would never wish to go home."

I scarcely knew what answer to give. I knew that Sir Reginald was most anxious to return to his native land, and I heard Robert Gordon say he would not live in Canada to be made its King, yet I could understand her feelings, and sympathise with them in her.

As for myself, each day seemed a year as long as I remained; after my health came back to me, I

seemed to have a fear of remaining where I had suffered so much.

Mrs. Percy was very unwilling to allow me go, and begged of me to stay until the tenth of December, when she herself was to have the doctor's leave to cross the ocean, but I could not remain; it seemed as if some feeling I could not conquer, urged me to go; I had determined, if God so willed it to spend Christmas day in my own home with Ella and Grand-papa, and I had a strong desire to remain a week or two in my old home at Leith, to rest before I resigned my room there, and left it, if to return ever, only as a stranger.

I had fulfilled the mission I had come for. Mrs. Percy was restored to her own people. God had in His mercy willed that it should end even as her dead mother had said it would. I was of no use in Montreal. Mrs. Percy had her two brothers and Mr. Morton, who never left her, (Major Seaton had gone to Nova Scotia the second day after Mrs. Percy had been removed from the convent to her brother's residence,) and I felt sure that had Lady Gordon been able to speak, she would have said, "Go home and rest in your own land, among your own people."

Not only was Mrs. Percy averse to my going, but several times Sir. Reginald added his entreaties to her's; and another, dearer, far dearer than beautiful Mrs. Percy or any Grand Gordon could be, pleaded with me to stay and be his wife, until my heart was like to break. But the Lord helped me, and even for

His dear sake, who was willing to sacrifice all for me, I strengthened myself to go.

Sir Reginald Gordon proposed to take me to visit the Falls of Niagara, the city of Quebec which constitutes the classic ground of Canada, and the Falls of Montmorenci. Six months before, I should have hailed with delight accepting of his kind offer in full; I had always looked forward to seeing the wondrous waters of Niagara which seem as if God poured them from His hollow hand, but now my spirit was bruised and broken, and it was only out of complaisance to Sir Reginald that I consented to spend a few days in seeing the City of Quebec and the Falls of Montmorenci; I chose them as being nearer Montreal, visiting them would occupy less time.

It is true I looked with my outward eyes upon both, but the Heights of Abraham are now only a name, I cannot realize ever having seen them. The quaint old city with its almost perpendicular streets I remember far less distinctly than a dream.

The Falls of Montmorenci I think of as a river struggling through snow clad heights crowned with trees, the leaves of which are feathery snow flakes, the trunks and slender boughs covered with a coating of thin ice, the cone in front of the Falls which by mid winter is as much the delight as the wonder of the pleasure parties who seek Montmorenci for tobogganing (a favorite winter amusement in Montreal as well as Quebec) was then in its incipient

state, not half the height which it would be a month afterwards, and in this incipient state the cone of Montmorenci, if it is ever recalled to my mind's eye, comes to me.

On my return I at once commenced making inquiries as to a vessel in which I could take my passage home. I would not ask Sir Reginald or Mr. Gordon either to do so, although both treated me exactly as if I had been a sister. I knew they would put one stumbling block after another, until the time passed off from day to-day, and the tenth of December came, when they would themselves go too.

Mr. Morton made inquiries for me, and on the eighteenth of November told me, that there was a ship to sail from New-York on the nineteenth, and another on the twenty-fifth. To go by the first I would have to leave Montreal by the train which started for New York at eight o'clock that evening. While we were speaking, the clock on the chimney piece pointed to half past six, and I decided to go by the vessel which was to sail on the twenty-fifth.

When I had made my decision, Mr. Morton said he would go as far as New York with me, and after seeing me on board, return to join the rest in Montreal. Having received my thanks for his proffered kindness which I gladly accepted of, he said, looking in my face with an earnest serious air—

"Miss St. Clare, I have something I wish to tell you, and which I think you should know, but it must never be repeated in Canada; I know I can trust you."

"I should hope you can," I replied, looking up in his face.

He then said *four words*, only four ; at first I could scarcely realize their import, but when at last I fully comprehended what he said, nothing short of deadly sickness could have kept me another night in Montreal.

At eight o'clock Mr. Morton and myself were on board the train for New York.

I was dressed and sitting by the parlor window of the Pullman car by early dawn. These railway sleeping berths are to me worse than being in a state room berth at sea, they make me giddy and sick ; we were at a station, and Mr. Morton who had been out on the platform, joined me a second after I entered the saloon.

"Look at that priest," said he, "try if you can think of any one he resembles."

A middle sized man, in the dress of a Jesuit priest, was strutting up and down the platform ; he was stout, rather out of proportion to his height, which in the clothes men ordinarily wear, made him look undersized ; of course a priest's robe gave him height as it always does ; something in his strutting walk, and about his short feet, reminded me of Captain Percy. He had gone to the end of the platform, and turning round faced me, so that I had an opportunity of seeing his face. It was very dark, with black hair, otherwise a perfect resemblance of Captain Percy ; the priest drew in his under lip pressing it with his teeth.

"That is Captain Percy in disguise," said I, almost involuntarily.

"You are right," replied Mr. Morton. "I heard him talking inside the bar room as I passed; the voice first attracted my attention; when I saw the man, there was no mistake; it is in this disguise he has eluded the officers of justice, who have vainly endeavored to apprehend him for the last sixteen days; I hope he will get off; on his trial it is most likely his real name would come out; this would be most annoying to the whole of the Gordons and Seatons, even if it could be concealed from poor Tiny, (I hate to call her by his name), which I fear would be impossible in those days when ladies read the morning papers as regularly as gentlemen."

I kept back from the window, yet seating myself so as to see him without his being able to see me. I had an uncontrollable dread of the man's basilisk eye and hooked finger. I was more open to his insult in a railway carriage than in a crowded court room. I knew he hated me, I fear the feeling was reciprocal, that I hated as well as dreaded him; I would not willingly have touched the clothes he wore.

The whistle shrieked, Captain Percy jumped upon the car platform, as if about to enter; a second or two after he came back again, his head bent down with a fierce scowl on his face, as he muttered some words very like an imprecation.

The cars moved on; it was with a feeling of intense relief I saw him left strutting up and down the plat-

form of the depot. The conductor afterwards told Mr. Morton, the priest had been put off the cars because he had no ticket and refused to pay for one, alleging that he was unprepared to do so, as in Canada all clergymen travelled free!

We arrived in New York just in time to reach the vessel which was to bring me to my own land.

I bade goodbye to Mr. Morton with a grateful remembrance of all his kindness since the first day I saw him, and sat on deck, looking at his smiling face as he waved his handkerchief on the quay, until both handkerchief and quay were gone from my sight.

We had the usual amount of sickness on board, which every one who traverses the ocean in the end of November must expect. There was only one lady passenger beside myself, the rest of the passengers being principally gentlemen going from Canada on business to England.

During the first few days of our voyage I was almost alone on deck, and had time to meditate on all the mercies which had been vouchsafed to me; the Lord had richly fulfilled His promise.

He was indeed with me in all my ways, and had brought me out of much tribulation, and set my feet in a large room.

In all that had befallen me I could see a need be. Without having committed the crime which consigned me to a prison, Captain Percy, if he failed in obtaining possession of his wife, would no doubt

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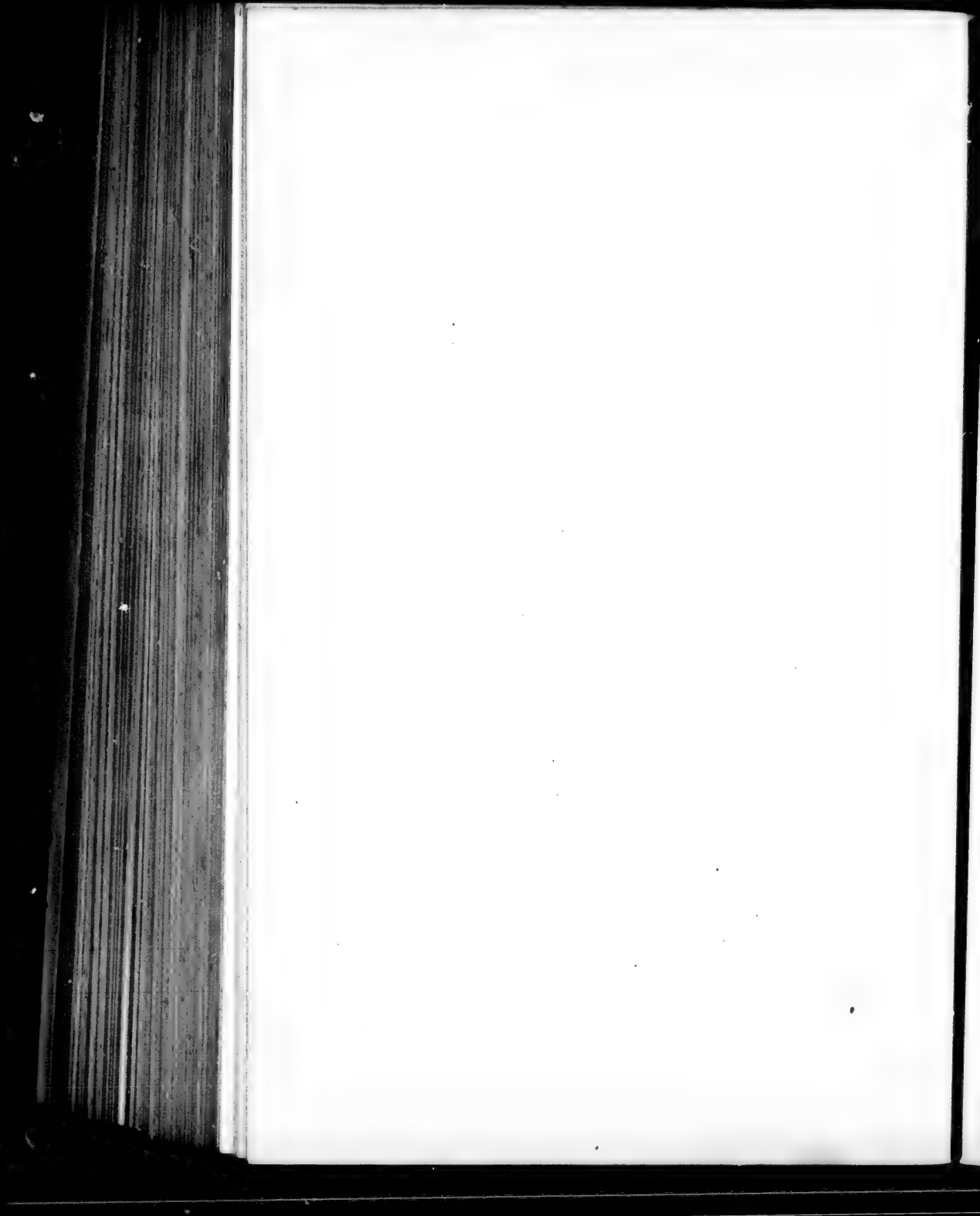
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have tormented her all her life. That it would be a most difficult thing to prove the crime of bigamy against Captain Percy, her brothers had already found to be the case. Mrs. Smith was gone, no one knew where, and those who had known them in Montreal could not tell whether they were really married or not.

He was now however a proscribed man, as much under the ban of the law in Britain as in Canada; Mrs. Percy and her children could now live in peace; there could be little fear of his attempting to disturb them.

Half an hour before I left Montreal, Mr. Morton had informed me in presence of Sir Reginald, that in terms of the document empowering him to spend ten thousand pounds in searching for Mrs. Percy, I was to inherit whatever was left of the sum in question after my work had been accomplished. I was thus rich beyond what I had ever thought of; there had not been a hundred pounds of the money spent, and Mr. Morton had Sir Reginald's orders to deliver the sum of ten thousand pounds intact into the Bank of Scotland in my name.

Grandpapa should have a new *Sabbath suit* every year, and anything else he liked; instead of sending Ella to teach in a school I would send her to Edinburgh, have masters to instruct her; she could now be as accomplished as I was not; and poor Janet should have a maid of all work to assist her, and her own wages doubled.

Almost alone on the deck of the Prussian I used

to sit, forming plans of future happiness, in which do what I would, a handsome face which had poured out a wealth of love for me while I was under a cloud of obloquy, steeped in misery, came and mingled with the few other loved ones I could call my own ; this was the cross I had to bear ; we have all one of some kind ; with some of us the iron enters sharper into the soul than with others ; I had taken up this cross voluntarily, and the dear Lord who alone knew my heart, would help me to bear it ; a blighted name must not be joined to his ; in the single life I looked forward to, my greatest blessing would be the knowledge that I had won his love.

On the fourth day of our voyage I was sitting thus, with closed eyes, dreaming of my loved ones in "Scotland o'er the sea," and, alas ! for our poor weak human nature, of one I had left behind, of my own free will, and yet I was wholly unable to banish from my heart of hearts ; when I was conscious of some one sitting down by my side, and opening my eyes, beheld in the other lady passenger, Abby !—

I at first recoiled from her, as I would from pollution, but a glance at her pale thin face and subdued eye, told me that if I would follow in my Master's path, I must try to pour the balm of healing into what was too evidently a wounded breast.

She at once recognized me, and almost immediately began to speak of Captain Percy, in a tone and manner which only one who firmly believed herself a wife could do.

She was as unreserved and communicative as ever, told me that it was with her entire acquiescence the American lady had given her evidence in my favor.

"If he had only stolen the things and not endeavored to put the blame on another," said she, "I would have done all to screen him I could, although goodness knows he deserves nothing at my hands, but to try and put the blame of what he was himself guilty on a poor innocent girl. Oh! I could not suffer that; it was worse that and stealing the things together, than all he had ever done to myself."

She was very ill, poor thing, and was on her way to her mother's home. She told me she determined to leave him when she found he had been a thief. Nothing, she said, could tempt her to remain with him after that.

"I knew he stole Mrs. Percy's money," said she, "and he stole mine, but he thought that was his own of course, because we were his wives."

I winced a little to hear her so coolly class herself with Lady Gordon's daughter.

"I had two hundred pounds saved when I was in India with Mrs. Douglasso, and Colonel Douglasso invested it in some way that gave good interest; I never drew the interest, and it grew to be three hundred pounds, when, like a fool, I told Captain Percy I had it, and nothing would serve him but I must take my hard won earnings and put them into his hands; once in, never out—that was the last sight I saw of my money. I got a letter of his the

day I came away from Montreal, with a hundred pounds in it, and I was real glad ; I was going to sell some of my clothes to get away, but I just took the money that was in the letter, and came to New York with it, but I was sick there, so I'm going home to mother, and unless Captain Percy can prove to me he's a changed man, I'll never live a day with him again ; we're poor but we're honest folk, and that's more than he can say, with all his pride."

This conversation, if conversation it can be called, where the talking was all on one side, took place the day before we expected to land. I saw from the first she was quite ignorant of the fact that Mrs. Percy was still in life, and I did not think it fair to the poor woman herself, that she should be left in ignorance of this, exposing her to a renewal of a life of crime, whenever it might suit Captain Percy to cajole her into believing he had been belied. I knew from all I had learnt of him, he had enough of sophistry to blind a more intelligent mind than hers. Besides, the day might come, when her testimony to the effect that she was really married to him, would be of the greatest use.

"Where were you married ? I asked.

"In Brooklyn, New York," was the reply.

"In church ?"

"Yes. Captain Percy did not wish to be married in church, because as he said we were to be married so soon after his first wife's death, but I was determined all my life that when I married it should be

all fair and square, in a grand church,—no higger mugger marriage for me, so we were married in the church of the Ascension, at Brooklyn, by the Reverend Doctor Tollman ; I had a beautiful bride's dress and veil, I have them yet, and we had a carriage and four, and an outrider, and white reins, and white satin favors on the coachman and the outrider."

As the poor thing spoke of the grandeur of her marriage, she raised her head, throwing it back, and putting on all the little airs I had seen her assume on my first acquaintance with her ; the feeling was very effervescent ; it soon passed away, and dropping her head again, she said—

"I did not think that day I was marrying a thief."

I judged this was perhaps the best opportunity I might have of telling her what it was well for herself and for every one concerned she should know, and looking her seriously in the face, until I caught her eye, I said—

"I see that you are not aware that Mrs. Percy is alive."

Her face became deadly pale, as with staring eyes she gasped out, "Mrs. Percy alive ! dont say that."

"I tell you God's truth ; she is alive and in Montreal."

"She is alive !—and in Montreal !" she repeated in a hoarse whisper, her face becoming livid, her lips as if they were baked dry ashes. "Oh ! no, no, it's not true, it couldn't be ; he went away in such bad

humor, and came back so jolly and pleased after she was dead. Oh! I'll never forget that day, him walking up and down the room, singing 'what a beauty I did grow, did grow;' it couldn't be true; you didn't see her yourself?"

"Yes I saw her myself; in the convent of The Holy Cross, before Captain Percy put the things he stole into my pocket, and since the day he was found out, on the second of this month, I have seen her almost every day; for twelve days past I have lived with her in her brother Sir Reginald Gordon's house on the mountain; I have sat at dinner with her, and driven out with her in the carriage every day; think you I could be mistaken in all that?"

"Her brother; who is her brother?" in the same hoarse whisper.

"Sir Reginald Gordon, who lives in Mr. Dyke's house, above Sherbrooke street."

"And he took her from Percy, and she has been all the time there?"

"No, Captain Percy put her to board in an Indian's hut, where she lived in great misery, and when her baby died, and was buried close beside the window where the poor mother sat, she had the two rings cut off her finger to buy white clothes and a little coffin to bury it in; and Captain Percy brought poison in a small blue bottle with a silver top, and gave it to his wife after her baby was dead, and told her to drink it."

I was thus particular, in case Abby might have

seen the blue bottle, and recognize the description. The poor woman put down her head between both her hands and groaned aloud—

“I saw the bottle, a flat glove bottle.”

She rocked herself to and fro as if she was trying to suppress some strong emotion, until unable any longer to control herself, she burst into a flood of tears.

She wept convulsively for some time, and when the violence of her tears had passed away, she said, speaking in detached sentences, in a repentant, depressed voice, or in angry tones, as the different emotions of regret or anger swayed her.

“I helped to do that—Oh! the wretch, the horrid wretch—Oh! me, me, when she gave me her letters to post, I always gave them to him—he was worse than the Devil, he began to speak evil of his wife the first week I was there—he deserves to be hanged—I hope he’ll be hanged—dont they hang them in England for marrying two wives?”

“No. The second marriage is not worth anything; it is not considered a legal marriage; besides he denies that he ever married you; if you have your marriage certificate, and he has given the proper name, Bertram Percy, he will certainly be punished with confinement perhaps for many years; but if your marriage certificate is not signed all right, he can laugh at you, and tell you he never married you.”

She rose on the instant, and with long quick steps

went to the companion ladder which she descended almost at a run ; she was gone for about five minutes, when she again made her appearance, coming up to where I sat, at the same rapid pace as she left the deck. She was a tall full made woman, and in her wrath had quite a commanding air ; every trace of illness had left her face and gait ; her step, quick as it was, seemed to be as firm as a rock ; altogether she gave me the impression of some handsome wild animal that had been chaffed and enraged.

She sat down on the bench beside me, and without speaking, put an envelope into my hand. I opened and looked at its contents ; it was a certificate of marriage, by special license, at the church of the Ascension, Brooklyn ; the ceremony performed by the Reverend John Edmund Tollman ; the names of the bride and bridegroom were clear enough, Bertram George Percy, Abigail Smith ; the witnesses were Richard Robertson, M. D. and Jonathan Stroud.

As I read the names aloud, she asked, as if she had not clearly comprehended what I at first said—

“ If it was not his own name, Bertram George Percy, that paper would be of no use ? ”

“ None whatever,” was my reply. “ It is not of much use even as it is ; it cannot make a marriage with a married man legal, but if his wife had been dead, and he had married you in another name than his own, that certificate would not be worth the paper it is written on.”

“ Oh ! the base villain ; he made all the excuses in

the world to get me to marry him by the name of George Smith, and if it had been a genteel name like Howard or Douglasso, I would'nt have cared, but George Smith! is'nt it common? I would'nt have such a name in place of Bertram Percy for nothing, so when he saw I would'nt, he gave in; Oh! the unhangd dog."

"This is all right," said I, when her impetuosity would allow me to speak. "He cannot deny this; he has incurred a great crime by deceiving you to your ruin, while his first wife was alive; that she is still alive, and in better health than she has been for years you can satisfy yourself by coming to Scotland at Christmas; by that time she will be in Rockgirtisle Hall; it is close to Leith, any cab-man will drive you, and I can answer that you will be received civilly."

"I dare say that; Mrs. Percy is too much of a lady to be rude to any one, but I could not face her after all I have done;—I could not look at her, after all the impudence I gave her;—but it is all his fault; he used to tell me things to say I could never have thought of; he often bid me call her an old Scotch cat. It was all his fault,—I was as good a girl as ever was when I lived with Mrs. Douglasso, and she was very sorry to part with me, only she was going home, and it would have been too expensive to take a maid and nurse both."

She stopped a second or two, to take breath; she spoke as she had moved when she went in search of the marriage certificate, but the false strength her

anger gave had passed away; she was pale and weak again, and speaking so rapidly and with the vehemence she used, exhausted the little strength she had picked up since she came on board.

She was nervous and excited; no wonder, poor thing; a less demonstrative nature than her's might have been so under the circumstances; she pulled out her handkerchief, a beautifully worked cambric one which I fancied I knew, and had packed up to be sent to India; she wiped her face, and then in her nervous unrest which must find employment, plaited the border of her handkerchief all round between her finger and thumb.

Stopping short, she spread the handkerchief upon her knee, saying as she did so—

“That’s her handkerchief; I have all her clothes, but I won’t be a thief like him; I’ll send them all back again.”

“Do not do so,” replied I. “Mrs. Percy would never wear any of those clothes again; it would only annoy her to see them, and I am sure you would not wish to do that.”

“No, indeed; I wish from my heart I could do anything which would show her that I repent bitterly of all I did to her, but I’ll suffer more myself than ever she can; I have to go back to my poor mother, and tell her I was married to a man whose first wife is alive. Oh! the wretch, the base wretch,” she continued, with wild rage. “I hope I’ll meet him yet, and tear his hair and his eyes out.”

"If you really wish to serve Mrs. Percy, I will tell you how you can do so."

"Tell me what it is, and I'll be glad to do it."

"You can let me take a copy of your marriage certificate; if she has that, he can never claim her for his wife, which he wishes to do; nor do I suppose he can have any claim to take the children from her; I do not think that with his character he would be able to do so even without this proof of his second marriage, but he would give her as much trouble as he could to get money from her."

"Take it and copy it if you like, but give it back to me again. I hope yet to make him be sent to Botany Bay with that. Oh! I could stand to see him hanged and quartered, the low beast that he is."

Her anger again vented itself in violent sobs and tears; when she had exhausted herself, she said, speaking so calmly that at first she startled me—

"Will you tell Mrs. Percy's brother, that if there is anything I can do to help them to punish him, I'll do it; I'll only be too glad to do anything to show I'm sorry for my own wickedness; I told him where she had the money she hid away to pay her passage home, and I watched for her letters and brought them to him, the beast who was leading me on to my ruin."

There was no use trying to lead her to a better way of thinking; to tell her to try to leave the old life behind; to forget it if possible; to strive to live a new life, with a different aim; she would not listen

to such counsel, perhaps it was too soon to give such——her heart was too sore, too full of her own wrecked life——the wounds she suffered from, were too fresh and bleeding; her very repentance was revenge.

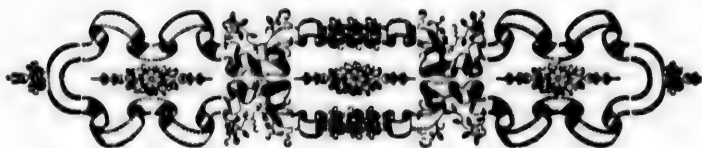
I copied her marriage certificate, and brought it with me to Edinburgh. When I bade her good-bye, she gave me the address of her mother in Cumberland, and again impressed upon me her earnest wish to criminate Captain Percy, to help to put him in prison, and send him to Botany Bay, as she herself expressed it.

I was in Scotland; in Edinburgh; by St. Giles Church, the dear old place, how my eyes seemed to recognize and my heart to love each stone in its walls as I passed.

In Leith at the door of the old house I lived so happily in.

I was listening to Marion's kind welcome; I felt the soft caresses of the children on my cheek; I told Marion of my anxiety to be at home, in the pleasant room I had called my own for so many years, and of the four words which made me start for New York, an hour and a half after hearing them.

"Blessed words," replied she. "Full of blessed meaning, full of mercy, and, 'His grace which faileth never!'"



CHAPTER XXVII.

"Pure, pure, glistening snow—chilling white snow—
Oh ! the want, and the sin, and the woe,
Crouching to-night 'neath the beautiful snow."—*Miss Haight.*

SIR Reginald Gordon and his brother had gone out, that they might walk round the Mountain once more ere they left Montreal ; They had seen the mountain city, with its mighty river sweeping round its base, and hurrying with its wealth of waters to the sea, in many phases ; first in its autumn dress of crimson, brown and gold, and then the time came when the Elm and Ash and Maple bent down their lofty heads to the wintry blast, and waved their leafless branches back and forth, as if impatient for the snowy covering which winter ever promised, ever sent.

It came at last—the pure beautiful snow, covering up all foul things with a more gorgeous dress than bride ever wore, hiding the dusty grey streets, with its trailing white garments, and clothing the rough black trunks, bare branches and slender twigs of the leafless trees, with verdure from Heaven's gates.

Tiny was alone ; her brothers had been gone an hour, and this hour she had passed watching the

snowflakes, as they fell so silently, filling the heart with light like sunshine.

A Lombardy poplar waved its long drooping snow covered branches so close to the window, that by a slight effort she could have touched them.

Something in the waving white branches brought her back to the Indian's hut and the great cedar with its double trunk, lurking behind which Bertram Percy had seen her lift the poison, and say the ominous words which made him think Tiny would trouble him no more forever; no, not forever; he did not think of that; *forever*, ETERNITY, were words the meaning of which he did not dare to dwell upon.

Tiny rose from her seat, and going to the window, looked out on the white mantle, covering all things like a shroud; it was a beautiful yet eerie sight, the untrodden snow all around, the broad flakes falling, falling, embedding the garden walks and stone steps leading to the piazza in front of the house.

There were prints of a man's foot on the drive from the gate up to the piazza; somehow those foot-prints gave her an uneasy feeling as she looked on them, she wished her brothers were at home; it could be neither of them who made these marks in the new fallen snow; they would return together as they went out, they always did so, neither could they be the prints of any of the servant's feet, they never came in by the drive; they were those of a man there could be no mistake, and somehow they reminded her of the short foot of Captain Percy.

The very thought made her shiver with a sudden fear, as if he was near and could touch her. Out there in the garden, the snow and moonlight made everything look nearly as bright as day, but inside, the room was full of shadows, the moonbeam straggling through the heavy damask and lace curtains, only serving to light up the portions of the apartment where the bright shadow of the windows lay on the crimson carpet.

She turned from the window that she might ring for lights, and so dispel the thoughts, that even in the daylight, and protected by the presence of her brothers, made her cheek pale and her limbs quake. She fancied that an audible sigh met her ear as she moved in the direction of the bell; involuntarily she raised her head in the direction of the sound, and there, in the light of the window, not two yards from her side, stood Captain Percy, with folded arms and pleading eyes, looking her in the face!

He had watched for this opportunity, prowling about the house every evening for many days back, and he determined to make the most of it. He knew that in the past, in India, in New York, in the Indian's hut, he had been forgiven seventy and seven times, and he feared not, notwithstanding all that had happened, to woo her back yet.

She almost shrieked with terror as she retreated into the recess of the window, that so she might be as far from coming in contact with him as possible.

He neither spoke nor moved, but continued looking

at her with fixed eyes, which in their beseeching gaze, he hoped would bring back to him the love which he now cursed himself for having thrown away. He was dressed with punctilious care, his friend Mr. Sharpquill having succeeded in obtaining his clothes from the poor woman, who, knowing him as a thief, was willing to be rid of all that belonged to him.

The humble pleading expression of his face and attitude, revealed to her more of his sordid, low, grovelling nature than all her former bitter experience had been able to teach ; the love which in her girlish folly had been based on nothing more stable than Bertram Percy's power of honeyed words, and of turning others into ridicule by his quick wit, had passed from her heart as completely as such love sooner or later must pass ; she was able now to exercise her judgment, and she saw before her the man who had tyrannized over her for years ; ever pointing with stern finger to the duty she owed to *him*, yet neglecting in the most flagrant manner the love and protection he had sworn to her before God's altar ; the man, who had by his false tale of the death of her children, and her disinheritance by her loving mother, taken every hope in life away, and prepared the way for the temptation to self destruction which he had brought her. The retrospective review served her in her need, and nerved her heart, even while she physically shook with a fear she was unable to control.

She was the first to speak. "What has brought you here, Captain Percy ?"

"The love I bear for my precious wife ; the love which made all the light my life ever knew."

He came towards her, endeavoring to clasp her in his arms, but she shrank back, saying in a voice nerved by the fear she had of ever again touching his hand—

"Do not dare to come near me, or I will bring every servant in the house to my aid ; there is nothing on earth which could tempt me to pollute myself by allowing you to touch me."

He folded his arms again across his breast. "When I entered this house, I came but to look upon you and go my way. I have again entered the Army ; my regiment is under orders for India, I sail with the morning light. You are well here, darling, surrounded with every luxury, I would not take you from it if I could ; I did not anticipate being able to speak one word to you ; I know how your jealous brothers hate me ; how they and those they have hired, have filled your mind with tales as false as hell against one whose only crime is in being poor."

"Did my brothers tell me that you brought poison from distant Europe, and gave it to me, urging me to drink, and so relieve you of the burden of my life ?"

"No ; you are right in all you say, except as to my having brought the poison from Europe—I obtained the bottle I gave you, and another exactly the same, from a friend in Montreal, who has been my heart's best brother for years ; he knew my life of poverty and toil, and that wearied with the hopeless strife,

I had resolved to lay it down; he knew where I had been obliged to place you, had accompanied me more than once when I walked from Montreal after six o'clock, when my day's work was done, that I might look upon the sleeping beautiful face of what I then believed to be my dying wife, and throwing myself on the earth for an hour of troubled sleep, returned in time to commence my daily toil; he knew also the poor fevered brain which induces me at times to do and say things, that did I not know they were the offspring of disease, would make me despise and loathe myself."

He here referred to a fiction he had invented, of a blow received on the head while a boy, which he alleged affected him so as to make him act and speak at times in a manner foreign to his nature; it was a convenient falsehood, and often stood him in good stead when he found it requisite to bury in oblivion his violence or treachery.

"Both bottles," continued he, "were filled with a harmless liquid; after giving you one, I went to the back of the cottage, and throwing myself on my knees, prayed that God would pardon what I had done, what I was about to do; I then went back, that standing concealed by the cedar tree, I might see your face once more ere death should close my eyes; you had the bottle in your hand, a look of pleased peace on your face, while your lips softly gave utterance to the words "It is an easy way out of all my troubles." "So it is, goodbye darling for

an hour,' said I, as I crept softly away, "lest I should disturb, and by my presence bring you back to an existence, where we had both been destined to suffer so much.

"I again lay down, and instantly swallowed the contents of the bottle intended for myself. I became unconscious almost immediately, only to awake in an hour or two, refreshed and strengthened, to bless the friend who had saved me from a great crime; I heard voices in the cottage, among which I could clearly distinguish yours; I thanked God for saving us both, and took my way to Montreal."

There was so much truth in what he said, and it was so artfully woven in with falsehood, that she began to ask herself, if with all his crimes, she had not been unjust to him in this instance; and a feeling of regret passed through her soul, as the thought arose in her mind that the story of the blue bottle should ever have passed her lips.

The softening expression of her face was by Captain Percy attributed to the love which he had so often crushed under his feet, but which would rise again with a kind look, a soft word, as if it were indestructible. Now was his time, her brothers might come upon them at any moment; he must excite an interest in her heart which would fan into a flame the dying embers of the love he believed to be still there; Tiny's house and income were better than his aunt's sixteen thousand pounds seven-fold, besides with Tiny by his side, would he not be sure of that also. All this passed through his mind in a second.

"My dearest wife, I have been belied to you by those whose sordid interest it is to keep us asunder. Believe me I can prove my innocence of all that has been alleged against me; had it not been that I was confined to my bed by raging fever, almost from the hour I last saw you in the Indian's cottage, until many weeks had passed, there never could have been such a web of falsehood woven around me. Darling, darling, forgive me for frenzy and weakness, which are not my fault, but my curse."

He sprung towards her, folding her struggling form in his arms, and keeping her firmly clasped to his heart by force. All the loathing she had felt, in the long ago, in India, against the man who had so fiercely urged her to write begging letters to her generous mother, and when she firmly refused to do so, forged her name to the letters her brother Robert had brought with him from Britain, that they might be used against the forger in case of need; the memory of all the tyranny she had suffered in New York, when Bertram Percy more than once squeezed her arm in his iron grasp, until the evidence of such remained for weeks, laughed at and encouraged her maid servant Abigail in all her low insolence and neglect; the fear and dislike, which growing for years, had now become detestation; dread of Bertram Percy, the forger—the Bigamist—the shop thief—all concentrated in unutterable loathing of the man who now dared to pollute her with his caresses.

"Unhand me—let me go instantly," she called aloud, with all the strength she could command. He

heeded her not, save to fold her more firmly in his arms. "Reginald,—Robert," she screamed out in piercing shrieks, which echoed all over the house.

Loud stamping in the halls and staircases,—loud talking,—the heavy tread of men's feet hurrying along—came like sweetest music to her ear; almost in the same instant, she was conscious of her brother Reginald's tall figure towering above her head, she felt herself lifted up, saw both her brothers standing close by the sofa on which she was laid, and Reginald's voice talking in quiet determined tones; Captain Percy blustering and stammering, as he always did when enraged. She looked in the direction that his voice came from, Sandy Mitchell and Brown, Sir Reginald's servant, who had been with his master in all his wandering for the last ten years, were taking Captain Percy from the room; his head was turned towards her, to the last, his own inordinate self esteem deceiving him, making him think that her efforts to disengage herself, and attract the attention of the household, were but half earnest,—the look of dread and dislike, which now met his eye, shewed him in one moment that from her love he had nothing to expect, it had perished for ever, buried deep down beneath the mountain of tyranny and crime he had himself heaped upon it.

He was scarcely prepared for this; Tiny looked so fair and beautiful, her white face and pale brown wavy hair forming such a contrast to the rich black silk she wore as mourning for her mother, and

child, so different from the poorly dressed half paralyzed thing, with the sad unvarying expression of face he had been latterly accustomed to see, that all the love and pride in her beauty he ever had, came back to him within the past half hour, and he could not realize that the feeling should be other than reciprocal; but the room was now flooded with light, her face full in his view, as she sat holding her brother Robert by the arm, seeming to claim his protection,—that white face betokening dislike and dread so strongly, that Bertram Percy, as he looked, knew that now for all time, there was a great gulf between them, which no power of his could span.

With this conviction came hatred, strong as death, revenge cruel as the grave, which he swore to himself, should end only with his life.

“You have not seen the last of me,” he exclaimed in a loud voice. “Until you enter the fiery den where your Hecat mother dwells, I will torment you through your children.”

As he spoke, his face expressed all the intense hatred and desire for revenge which pervaded his whole soul.

In Margaret Gordon's after-life, when accident recalled Bertram Percy's face, it always wore the expression she then looked on.

It was well for her that it was so.



CHAPTER XXVIII.

IT was one of those dark rainy days that have often to be endured in Scotland during the month of December; it was very muddy and disagreeable *up* in Edinburgh, as the people in Leith say, *up* there where there are well made broad streets, *down* in Leith with its comparatively speak-poorly made streets and narrow pavements absolutely insufferable; the rain had been drizzling, for two or three days, and the mud below foot, with the drizzle, drizzle, of the rain above, kept everyone within doors, except those whose occupation forced them to go abroad.

Captain Percy and his friend, Mr. Morrison the lawyer, met on this wet disagreeable day, not far from the old house from which Captain Percy had taken his bride only a few years before, and to which he was now directing his steps, with the intention of taking up his abode, whether his wife would, or whether she would not.

Both men were poorly dressed; both had the look of needy men; they looked at each other or rather at each other's coats, and would rather have passed by with a nod; each man knew he himself was

poorly dressed, that he looked shabby, that his clothes were old, his hat thread-bare, his shoes such as he would not have worn if he could have helped it, no not on any account, but each knew it would attract more attention, seeing two poverty stricken individuals together, than if there was only one such. They were both naturally punctilious as to their attire; they had been accustomed from boyhood to be well dressed, and so felt more keenly the present dilapidated state of their respective wardrobes.

But they had been very intimate, indeed on the occasion of Captain Percy's last visit to Leith to attend Lady Gordon's funeral, or rather to hear her will read, it would have been awkward to have passed with a nod after so long an absence, besides each felt the other might be useful to him, and so they stopped, shook hands, asked one another if they were quite well, and then spoke of the weather.

"How are they getting on up at the old house there?" asked Captain Percy, indicating by a motion of his head, what old house he meant, which indeed was superfluous, as Mr. Morrison knew there was only one old house in Leith which it was at all likely Captain Percy would be interested in.

"Cant possibly say." was the reply. "The fact is I have been in the country ever since I saw you last, left that very night, and only returned this morning.

"Well I was,—in fact I was not at all well, had been working too hard, and so I thought I would take a few months of holidays."

"You went on the principle that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, eh?"

"Exactly, what have you been about yourself?" Mr. Morrison said this to change the conversation; he did not wish to be closely questioned as to where he had or where he had not been, during the past six or eight months.

"Very little good; got into a terrible mess, but the truth is I'm not going to look back; the past is past, the future is all before us, and we can be master of the situation if we make ourselves so."

"That's so."

"I think I'll tell you what brought me here at present; we'll walk up to your office."

"Well I—I haven't an office just at present; as I knew I was to be away so long I gave my office up; it would have been nonsense to pay rent for nothing."

"Of course, well, we'll go in somewhere, but—the truth is I am short of cash just now, and besides I left my purse in my overcoat in Edinburgh."

The truth was, his last shilling was spent in paying for his breakfast that morning.

"Well," said Morrison, "I stand treat now and you fork out next time, but we wont go into any of those nobby places, they charge such deuced big prices, and besides, I've on all the old togs I have been wearing in the country, my luggage has not been sent from the station yet."

"I dont care much where I go ; I want my dinner, that's a fact, and I was on my way up to the old house which I consider my own now ; I intended to have taken my dinner at home."

"What, how is this, I thought you were clean cut out ?"

"The old woman tried that, but it was no go ; it was a good job for me she died, she looked as if she had seven lives, I'm sure I never thought I would have seen her grave."

"She did look a strong-like old woman in church or in the streets, I never had a chance of seeing her anywhere else."

They had been walking on, and now stopped at the door of a low public house, where they entered, had a cheap dinner, and Morrison would have had something to drink after it, but Captain Percy objected, saying—

"I will need all my wits about me for this day, perhaps I will meet you here in the evening and have something, it's a teetotal place up yonder, but I mean to change all that."

"You must tell me about your good luck," said Morrison. "How did you manage to get the will broke ?"

"I did not get it broke, I never tried to do so ; the will stands as it did when I told you of it, and yet I'm master up at the old house."

"This is a riddle, you must explain yourself ; you

did not look upon yourself as master when I saw you last, on the day the will was read."

"No. Because I did not know then what I know now; the truth is that at that time my wife, Lady Gordon's daughter was so ill, that when I left her in Canada I did not think she would live until I arrived here, and looked on the will in the light it would have appeared to me if she had been dead, but instead of being dead when I went back I found her much better, and she is now so well that I expect her to come home some time this winter."

"What do you say?" inquired Morrison, in tones of surprise, and staring in his friend's face as he spoke. "You do not surely mean to say that Lady Gordon's daughter is alive? I thought you"—

"No matter what you thought," interrupted Captain Percy. "I tell you a plain matter-of-fact story; my wife was so ill when I left Canada that when I was here I thought she was dead, and when I went back to Canada I found her better, and she will be home sometime soon, certainly this winter."

"Well I never" said Morrison, in tones of wonder and half admiration, thinking he saw through the dodge of his clever friend. "But what will you do if the friends wont believe that your wife is Lady Gordon's daughter?"

"All that is settled to their perfect satisfaction; they are quite clear on that point, and Morton the lawyer and the young cub Robert Gordon are both out in Canada; they went on purpose to bring her

home, and another brother, who they thought lost, is there with them, a man with an immense fortune, and they are doing all they can, like good Christians as their mother's sons should be, to try to put evil in my wife's head against me, and to make her cast me off, so that I may not have a home at the old house, but I suppose this will not be in their power?"

"Certainly not; if Lady Gordon's daughter is alive, you are entitled to live with your wife; it is not so easy to cast a husband off as that comes to; besides you could take your children if the worst comes to the worst; that would soon bring them all to terms."

"What would you advise me to do? Don't you think it will be the best plan to go at once to the house, and take up my abode there, will they, nil they? I am sure old Marion Frumps will resist that with all her might, but I daresay I have enough of a man about me to overcome her impudence."

"Yes," said Morrison, speaking slowly as if he was conning the matter over in his own mind, "that will be the very best plan you can take, possession is nine points of the law, take the bull by the horns, and you give him less chance to fight with you; if you are installed as master there when Mrs. Percy and the brothers come home, there is less chance of your being turned out, than there would be of your getting your foot in, if they were there and you outside."

"It is a curious thing, the brothers wishing to put evil between you and your wife, particularly as they

do not come into the inheritance; in case of the death of your wife, it goes to some public charity, does it not?"

This was said as a feeler. Morrison could not forget that eight months back, Captain Percy had a young woman with him at Kay's Hotel, of whom he seemed very fond, and who was introduced to him by Captain Percy as his wife; he would have liked an explanation of this, but it was not Captain Percy's intention to make any explanation on the subject, so for the present, the lawyer had to rest satisfied with what he had been told, taking no notice of Morrison's question as to the terms of the will, Captain Percy said—

"I will go now, and introduce myself to my future servants, that is they will be, if they behave themselves, if not, out they go, every mother's son of them; I have an old grudge against Madame Marion, I'll turn *her* to the right about at any rate; she was always trying to do me evil with the old mother and my wife both."

"If that is the case the sooner she is sent to the right about the better for you, but be careful what you do the old Duchess is not dead a year yet, and it may be a ticklish thing interfering with servants or anything else until the year is out."

"I'll not commit myself, you may be sure, but of course there can be no question as to my right of living in the house that belongs to my wife? you ought to know that."

"There is no question about it whatever; what belongs to your wife, ought to belong to you; you may be cut off from using the money left to your wife except what she gives you, and if she does not give you enough, I should call that your fault not hers; I know if I was lucky enough to have a wife with half the money your's has, I would never take a pen in my hand except for amusement, and I would take precious good care that my pockets were always well lined."

Morrison said this with a malignity of expression both in voice and face, that was particularly pleasing to Captain Percy, as assuring him of his power over his wife, both to extort money from, and torment her.

"There is one thing I fear will give me trouble, that is the influence which I know her brothers have already acquired over her; my own plan is to be there when they arrive, and to tell my wife that she must decide between her brothers, or me and my children; where I am they must be, and I shall certainly never live in the same house with either of her brothers."

"That is a very good plan, follow it out, only be determined enough, if you show the white feather you are done for; at present it is all plain sailing, you have only servants to deal with, they know you, that you are the husband of their mistress, and being her husband her master; and then also, do not excite their ill temper, if possible, but be resolved to remain there to wait for your wife."

The friends bade each other good day, promising to meet in the evening, and Captain Percy took his way towards the old house, a little nervous, although he knew that he had only servants to contend with; had he known that Marion was absent, which was the case, he would have gone with little trouble, she being the one whose face he feared to see.

As he opened the postern gate, he observed that there were recent marks of wheels among the shingle on the drive, and also that the grounds were laid out with great care, that late as the season was, there were several men working in the shrubbery and gardens, that the conservatory had undergone a complete renovation, and on coming near he saw that the latter was filled with flowers; everything about and around the house spoke of the time when he first saw it, when he went there to woo the one he had so often since then, tormented almost unto death, the one who he now hated with undying hate.

A plant of gum cistus in full blossom attracted his attention, its pure white wax-like petals lying on the broad green and brown shining leaves, in all the beauty which has gained for it the name of Christmas-rose; he remembered this last flower of the year as an especial favorite of Margaret Gordon's, and he could not resist the temptation of crushing it deep into the earth with his heel.

He looked at his work well pleased, the white petals, pistils, and stamens torn and bleeding, soiled and crushed into the black damp earth. "This is a

good omen," soliloquized he. "So perish all the enemies of Bertram Percy."

He walked up to the hall door with more courage than he had entered the gate; he knocked at the door, a loud knock—and as he did so, he smiled in fiendish glee at the triumph he was now achieving over the dead mother and the living child—the wife who he swore to himself when he had received the last farthing of money which was her's to give, he would do unto death by slow yet sure means.

The door was opened by one to whom he was a stranger, a servant man in plain clothes, not a girl who for several years previous to Lady Gordon's death had held the place. "Ha!" said he, "Mistress Tiny is determined to enjoy life; when the year is out I will teach her to economise."

He walked past the servant without saying one word.

"Who shall I say, Sir?" demanded the man.

"You need not announce me; I am master here," was the reply.

The servant stared at the shabbily dressed man, who, he saw, notwithstanding his soiled and worn clothes, was a gentleman, walk coolly upstairs and enter the great drawing room.

Captain Percy took this as another good omen. "The gods are on my side to-day, my star is in the ascendant; who shall question my right here now?" His courage was at its height; he almost wished that Marion would make her appearance that he might

enjoy her look of helpless blank astonishment, when she saw he had come to take possession, in right of his wife.

He entered the grand drawing room. "Ha!"—There had been a complete renovation here also; the faded crimson damask was gone, and in its place curtains and sofas of richest purple and gold, made the room resplendant in the sunshine, which came flooding the room with departing light, after the rain on the short winter's day.

He threw himself down on one of the sofas; he was fatigued, and the spring seat and soft pillows formed a luxurious bed; he lay with his face towards the windows where the sunshine came in, his feet, soiled and wet, covered with shoes worn into holes, placed against the satin covering of the opposite arm of the sofa; he was prepared to enjoy himself, produced a cigar from his pocket and coolly commenced smoking, smiling to himself as he thought of the rage of Lady Gordon, could she see him now.

The spaces between the three windows were occupied by large mirrors, placed on white slabs of Carara marble, beautifully carved statuettes, Neptune and Venus rising from the sea, forming their supports. The frames of the mirrors were made to resemble water lilies drooping amid their foliage, sea-shell connected the wreaths at top and bottom, the gilding of which glistened with dazzling light in the wintry sun.

Bertram Percy had an eye for the beautiful, and

while he deprecated the expense which had been incurred to adorn the home his wife was to return to, he could not help admiring the taste which had displaced the stiff old looking glasses, and placed those magnificent mirrors with their flower wreath frames and marble statuary in their stead.

As he looked, something black seemed to move in the far depth of the mirror nearly opposite the sofa where he lay, his heart beat with accelerated pace as the black object, assuming a woman's shape of stately mien with long trailing dress, came towards him ; his unfinished cigar fell from his hand, his dilated eyes staring on the woman's figure, with deadly fear making his coward heart to quake.

On and on it came, with a slow and measured pace, its great dark eyes which seemed to emit an unearthly light fixed on his face ; his heart beat in wild throbs ; nearer and nearer it came, the horrible phantom—the thing from the dead—as surely as ever he saw Lady Gordon in life, did he see her face then—clad in the grey hue of the grave, where he knew she had lain so long—his heart stood still—great drops of sweat coursed each other down his face and neck—the spirit was close to the face of the mirror framed round by the golden wreath, its eyes filled with a look of dire vengeance fixed on his face—the awful thing of fear and horror moved on towards him, a thousand times more horrible in those black robes as he had seen her in life, than if the dead face had come, borne above the habiliments of the grave ;

an instant more she was surrounded by phantoms blacker, with paler faces more awful than herself, and they seemed legion, one ghastly head with forked hair white as snow, towering above the others.

Human nature could bear it no longer, and with a wild shriek he sprang to his feet, his back towards the mirror, that he might rush from the room, ere those things of dread and horror could reach where he stood, and tear him limb from limb, or worse still sweep him from the earth, clothed in his living body, to the abode of spirits, who, like himself, had done evil, and that continually.

Horror! in turning from the mirror, he had come face to face with the things of dread.

Lady Gordon standing within a few yards of where his own trembling fear-distraught body stood. Seaton of Thurlow, and Peter Farquharson of Alderlee, with his long grey hair as white as snow, beside and behind her!





CHAPTER XXIX.

WE must now retrace our steps in this story, so that our reader may understand how it is possible that Captain Percy could meet Lady Gordon in the old house, either in the body or out of the body.

It will be remembered that on Wednesday morning at two o'clock, when Miss St. Clare went to bid goodbye to Marion, she found that the housekeeper was not in bed, nor had she been during the night. Miss St. Clare concluded that Marion had gone to bid goodbye to her brother, but it was not so.

On Tuesday night Marion felt troubled and nervous, constantly thinking of her mistress; when the others retired to rest she felt that it would be impossible for her to sleep; she could not even sit in her chair for a half hour at a time; she did not attempt to rest in her bed, she knew such would be futile; she heard each hour strike, ten, eleven, twelve, and then sitting in her chair, she slept an uneasy and troubled sleep, in which she saw Lady Gordon lying in her coffin and her body turned on its side!

She awoke to complete consciousness, with a wild fear lest some great and dreadful mistake had been

made; she well remembered Lady Gordon's asseveration long after the Doctor had declared she could not live, "I will do all as if I had an assurance that I must die as the Doctor says, but I cannot feel that it is true; I have no feeling of what I have always conceived to be death."

She started up, and snatching a shawl, threw it over her head, taking her way to the passage which led to the door of the house nearest to the stables; as she passed the hall clock she saw and noted that it was within ten minutes to two.

She knew the coachman would be preparing to take Miss St. Clare to the railway depot, and she found him ready, his horse in a light covered carriage, all in waiting.

"What is the matter, Mrs. Mitchell? is any body sick?" asked the man, alarmed by her pale face, and her coming to the stable yard at that early hour.

"No, James, there is nobody sick, but I have had the most awful dream about her Ladyship; I could not rest last night, and I was not in my bed, but sleeping in my chair; I saw her turned in her coffin; come with me, James, if you drive hard we can be at the mausoleum and back in time for you to take Miss St. Clare to the depot."

"I'll go with you to the mausoleum if Miss St. Clare should never go to the depot; besides her trunks are there, it's not far off, she can walk, and Mr. Morton's coming to go to Glasgow with her; jump in, Mrs. Mitchell, if the half of your dream is true, we're too long here."

"Put that round you," continued he, throwing into the carriage a couple of carriage blankets, as he saw the woman shiver with cold in the bleak morning air. "You have the key?"

"Oh! yes, here it is."

The man drove swiftly along the broad walk leading to the mausoleum, which was built in a grove of trees about a mile and a half from the house.

As they hurried along, the thoughts of both Marion and the coachman, an old and valued servant of the house, ran in the same train; they both thought, with awe akin to horror, of the dread Lady Gordon had always expressed of being buried alive, of her explicit command that the cover of her coffin should be left open until signs of decay evinced themselves on the body.

And they each remembered as they looked on the dead face of their mistress, how the thought occurred each visit they paid to her bier, "how like life, how unlike death!"

If they should find it so, that the body had really turned in the coffin, how could they ever forgive themselves for not giving utterance to the thoughts which arose in their hearts? Yet others, those of her own kindred, had noticed and commented on this very fact, and what came of it? Their words were uttered, and the sound died away on the ear, and the remembrance thereof at the same time.

The key turns in the door of the mausoleum; the man and woman enter; they approach the open

coffin; the body of Lady Gordon is turned on its left side, the right hand clasping the edge of the coffin!

For one moment they gaze on each other in speechless horror—the next Marion has removed the cloth which covers the face, a slight moisture is on the brow and cheek.

They do not speak, no, not one word, but they act as much in concert as if they possessed two bodies and one soul.

Marion strips off her flannel underskirt; it is put on the body, which feels soft and flexible, not stiff and hard, as it did yesterday and the day before, and every day since she died until now; the man's warm overcoat is taken off and wrapped round his dead mistress.

The shawl which Marion had snatched up as she left the house, is carefully put over the head and shoulders, and the body is lifted into the carriage, held tightly in Marion's arms, covered up with the carriage blankets.

The wheels run smoothly along the soft grassy sward which covers the seldom trodden path, Marion hears an audible sigh, and the old coachman catches a fervent "thank God," as it passes from Marion's lips up to the throne on high.

Hours after, Lady Gordon awoke as from a deep sleep. For days and weeks her life hung on a thread; she was unconscious of aught save a long illness; she was told of Miss St. Clare having gone in search of Mrs. Percy, and felt pleased that it was so, saying, "I am sure she will be successful."

The month of August had come with its golden grain and mellow fruit, ere the doctor deemed it wise to inform Lady Gordon that her funeral obsequies had been performed; that she had lain as one dead for six days, and that during two days a household had worn mourning for their mistress.

In the month of October, Miss St. Clare's letters were received, informing Sir Robert, Seaton of Thurlow, and Marion, that Mrs. Percy was found, but that for two years back she had deemed her mother an inhabitant of the grave.

Lady Gordon had prevented Mr. Morton from informing Miss St. Clare of her Ladyship's being in life, for several months, as she feared that being aware of this, might make her less anxious in the search for Mrs. Percy, fancying that Lady Gordon would herself, on her restoration to health, come at once to Canada, for the purpose of finding her daughter, as she had formerly intended to go to India, which of course would have been the case.

When she found that Tiny was under the impression that her mother's death had taken place two years previous, she judged it best not to undeceive her, as in her nervous state, it might cause excitement which would be highly prejudicial, and materially impede her recovery.

Thus it was that Major Seaton, when he left his Scottish home immediately upon his sister's marriage, which took place a few days after Lady Gordon's supposed death, knew nothing of her being still

alive when he first spoke to Sir Reginald Gordon on the subject, nor was he informed of the fact until his departure for Nova Scotia, the day after Mrs. Percy left the convent, to become an inmate of her brother's house.

The same reason made it prudent to conceal the joyful tidings from Miss St. Clare, until she had decided to return home in advance of the others, when Mr. Morton whispered to her the four words, "Lady Gordon is alive," which decided her in commencing her journey home that night.

By the middle of December, Lady Gordon's health was better than it had been for years, she had as the reader is aware, made many preparations in expectation of her daughter's return; she had received letters from both her sons informing her that they were at Liverpool on their way home.

Sir William and Lady Hamilton were her guests, so that Tiny might enjoy the companionship of her early friend, Mary Seaton, on her first return to her home.

Seaton of Thurlow and Peter Farquharson, had come from Edinburgh, to obtain her Ladyship's signature to some deeds which had been drawn out in favor of her son Robert, who had now to resign his title and estates in favor of his elder brother.

Lady Gordon and her guests were seated in the inner drawing room, the rainy day in December on which Captain Percy and his friend Mr. Morrison met so opportunely in Leith; Tiny and her brothers

were expected by the evening train, and the guests of the afternoon were pressed by her Ladyship to remain and welcome home the dear and long lost.

Leonora and Charlie were schooled many times by Marion and their French nurse, as to how they were to greet their Mamma upon her arrival, but the instructions they received were so contradictory, that it seemed little probable they would be able to act out the desires of either, which upon the whole was perhaps quite as well.

Lunch had been served in the inner drawing room ; Lady Gordon was reading the last letter she had received from her eldest son, in which he said, " Without telling Tiny absolutely that she will see you alive and well upon her return home, I think it will be well to prepare her mind in some measure for the event, in case the surprise might be too great. She so often says, ' My faith used to be so strong that Mamma would be the first to welcome me ; how shall I bear to see the door open, and know that I can never see her face for evermore ? ' " —

Lady Gordon had read thus far, when a loud rap at the outer door announced the arrival of some one who felt himself of consequence, or knew his coming would be fraught with pleasure to those he wished to see.

Her Ladyship stopped and looked up, as if she expected some one to enter. A slow uncertain step on the staircase, along the hall, into the grand drawing-room.

The servant entered. "A gentleman has gone into the drawing-room who refuses to give his name, and walked upstairs unbidden."

Her ladyship looked through one of the doors on either side of the fire place which formed an entrance into each room from the other. Reflected in one of the large mirrors she beheld Captain Percy enter, and throwing himself on one of the sofas, produce a cigar which he coolly lit and commenced smoking.

Her heart never failed her for one moment. By Miss St. Clare she had been made aware of all his recent misdeeds, that he was a fugitive from justice, a bigamist, a shop thief, and she was perfectly aware that had the smallest child who crossed his path on his way to her house, whispered "Lady Gordon is alive, you will see her in the old house," his footstep had never crossed her threshold.

Lady Gordon attracted the attention of her guests by silently pointing in the direction of the mirror; they as well as herself were fully aware of the hallucination which directed the man's steps to Rockgirtisle House, and either of the gentlemen present would at once have removed him from the house, without reference to her Ladyship, but that on looking at the cool self-possession she maintained, they were at a loss to know whether or not such a proceeding would be pleasing to her.

"Shall I tell him he is not wanted here, and have him taken care of?" asked Seaton of Thurlow.

"No," replied her Ladyship. "I shall do so myself,

more effectually than any other can ; something tells me it is the last time he and I will ever meet, until the day when the dead, small and great, stand before God ; he knows naught of my being alive, or he would not be here, not so soon. I should rather his punishment came from another hand than mine."

She rose, and motioning to Mr. Seaton and Peter Farquharson to follow her, slowly walked into the room where Bertram Percy lay smoking, so much at his ease ; the reader is already aware of the effect her entrance seen in the mirror had on him, who had every reason to believe that for many months past she was an inhabitant of the grave.

Ere the shriek he gave as he sprang to his feet had ceased echoing through the apartment, Lady Gordon was seated with arms crossed on her bosom, and eyes in which contempt and pity strove for the mastery, gazing on the ill-dressed, mud-splashed, damp, almost shoeless figure before her ; a feeling of thankfulness rising in her soul that Tiny was spared the painful spectacle on which she looked.

"Bertram Percy," she began, "when I saw you last, I bade you never come again into my presence ; never again to invade the peace of my dwelling ; what evil chance has sent you here ?"

He was now sure that it was no phantom in whose presence he stood, but he never for one moment entertained the idea that Lady Gordon was the woman who sat and looked with her stately presence, spoke with her voice, dressed in her robe of costly velvet,

and rich point lace lappets falling over her black hair down on her shoulders; he never for one moment doubted that Lady Gordon of Rockgirtisle was sleeping soundly in the mausoleum down yonder among the great elms and pine trees; he knew that Lady Gordon had a sister, the wife of a Russian noble, whom he had once seen, and he believed the woman who now looked on him, as if her eyes could search into his soul, to be the Countess Zallie. It is true his recollection went back to a woman of fair complexion, and less stately mien than the one he saw before him, and who so exactly resembled Lady Gordon, but this was the only solution he could find, and he adopted it.

He drew his under lip into his mouth for a second or two, crushing it beneath his teeth, as if this would help him to solve the dilemma in which he was placed, at last summoning courage, he exclaimed in a fierce tone—

“When I saw you last, you had no power to forbid my presence here, and I have to be told what good the Countess Zallie expects to effect by treating me with such rudeness in my wife’s house, my own house?”

Lady Gordon’s large dark eyes never for a moment relaxed their hold on his, and he quailed beneath her glance, as every second that passed was forcing upon him the conviction, that the woman he hated and feared more than any man or woman he had ever known, was before him, in some mysterious way, in the body.

He had not seen her as she lay in the deathlike cataleptic fit; he saw no interment; he was not there when the funeral procession moved off, and a wild idea seized him that the death he had heard of was a pretence, the will a fiction, to deprive him of his right to a share of her fortune as the husband of her only daughter; this passed through his mind in a second of time. Lady Gordon spoke—

“Bertram Percy, you know that I am Lady Gordon, not the Countess Zallie; you also know that this house is mine, not Tiny’s, and were it her’s to-morrow, a felon could have no right over it; you are a man under the ban of the law, and as such I order you to leave my house and enter it again never.”

The man was desperate; he had not a shilling to pay for a bed or to buy a meal to satisfy his hunger, and looking Lady Gordon in the face, he said—

“I demand my children; I will not leave this house until they go with me.”

He saw the color rise in her pale face—Ha! he had her now, through them he would triumph; he would be master in the old house yet, and he would rule over them all with a rod of iron.

Lady Gordon rose from her seat and turning to Mr. Farquharson, said “I am weary of all this; you will arrange it better than I can; pray get that man out of the house as soon as possible.”

As her Ladyship finished speaking, a servant entered with a telegram which he presented to his mistress. Lying on the salver, with the telegram mark

upwards, Captain Percy saw what it was, and at once guessed its contents, and also from whom it came; it was handed by her Ladyship to Mr. Farquharson, saying as she did so with an inquiring tone "Five o'clock?"

"No" was the answer, as he read the telegram, "seven."

Captain Percy understood the meaning of those words as well as the persons who uttered them, he had calculated that Mrs. Percy would be at home on the morrow; well pleased he heard she would arrive that evening; with her and his children both in the house, the game would be in his own hands.

He was in a fierce insolent mood; the telegram had given him fresh hopes; come what would, he need never want for money while these rich Gordons had it; they were in his power, not he in theirs. A felon,—he laughed to think of such poor threats; he well knew, none better, that these proud Gordons would freely spend thousands ere they would allow one who had ever any connection with them, he under the fangs of the law for such a crime as theft; he knew there was another crime for which he was amenable to the law of the land, but he could defy them there, and he hugged himself, as he thought of the impossibility of their ever being able to bring that home to him.

Tiny would be here to-night; where his wife and children were, he would be, or he should know the reason why; if they wanted to be free of him they

would have to buy that freedom at a large price ; he would take no niggard sum, and then there was something they could not buy ; he must see that proud woman humbled before him in the dust ; this would be better than if he had found her dead—the house empty.

Lady Gordon was leaving the room ; his innate insolence could not allow this to be unnoticed, and with a voice and look the concentration of bitter impertinence, he said, as if in reply to what she had spoken to Mr. Farquharson—

“ If you are wearied, Madame Gordon, you may go now, but you will have to return quickly to sue for terms with me.”

Lady Gordon's face, figure, or motion gave no sign that his words were heard ; she passed slowly into the inner drawing room, followed to the door by Mr. Seaton, who, closing it, returned to the middle of the room where he had left Mr. Farquharson and Captain Percy, saying to the former—

“ Now do your duty.”

Mr. Farquharson thus called upon, took from his coat pocket a bundle of papers tied with red tape, from which, selecting one, he said—

“ Captain Percy, I here accuse you of the crime of bigamy.”

“ It is a lie,” was the reply, uttered in a loud voice, the tones of which would have been startling, were they not half choked with anger.

Mr. Farquharson selected a paper from those he

held in his hand, and presented it to Captain Percy.

It was his marriage certificate with Abigail Smith ! For a moment he was stunned, but remembering the advice of his friend, " If you show the white feather you are done for," he plucked up courage. Brooklyn, New York, was a long way off; much might be done before this could be proved to be the genuine signature of these gentlemen; much might be done now, he thought, as he glanced towards the fire, burning brightly within a few yards of where he stood. The thought was hardly conceived when it was executed; in a second the certificate was a light grey wavy thing carried up the chimney amid the smoke !

He turned with a smile of triumph towards the two quiet looking men who had now seated themselves, as if they expected their business would occupy some time.

" So perish all the enemies of Bertram Percy," exclaimed he, using his favorite aphorism. " That certificate is false as hell, the signature a lie, and both of you know it to be such; if you did not, you would not sit so calmly there seeing it destroyed."

There appeared to himself some truth in his last observation.

" You are mistaken," was Mr. Farquharson's cool reply. " The document you have just burned, was a duplicate, of which I have several; there is another," continued he, laying down a second certificate upon the table by which he sat; " you can examine at your

leisure, and destroy it or not as you please. I have been too long accustomed to deal with gentlemen of your calibre, not to understand exactly how far they may, and how far they may not, be trusted with such perishable things as paper and ink."

"And now," continued he, in the same cool strain as he had first spoken, "here are other documents for you to examine, corroborative of the certificate of marriage, and in order to prevent your taking unnecessary trouble, let me draw your attention to the fact of their being also duplicates."

Captain Percy looked at the papers placed in order before him; they consisted of affidavits from Doctor Tollman, his clerk and verger, also from the two witnesses who signed the certificate, as being present at the ceremony of his marriage with Abigail Smith, all plain matter of fact statements about which there could be no quibbling; there was no door to creep out; he crushed his lip with even more than his usual vehemence; he was at fault——

"You see," said the lawyer, "we have spared neither trouble nor expense; these few documents, together with the American and Canadian warrants, which enable me to arrest and commit you to prison, either in the United States, Britain or Canada, cost close on five hundred pounds, exclusive of my own bill, which I must make a large one on account of the anxiety the case gave me; to be sure we made free use of the cable, kept it at work for nearly a whole day, but then we had the satisfaction of know-

ing when all was finished, that everything was arranged according to the law of both countries; there was no loop hole, which a wily desperate man like you would be sure to avail himself of. We have been expecting you here for some days back; we knew you would come, and not give us the trouble to unearth you from your hole. So by exerting ourselves and spending Lady Gordon's money freely, (which to her is a bagatelle, you know she is enormously rich; she always was, and within the last six months, she and the Countess Zallie have between them divided upward of a million of money, the fortune of a brother who died in India,) we had all things cut and dry, ready for you eight days back."

As Mr. Farquharson finished speaking, he went to a side table, and taking therefrom writing materials, placed them before Mr Seaton, saying—

"I will thank you, in your capacity of Justice of the Peace, to make out a warrant for the apprehension of Bertram George Percy, at my instance."

Captain Percy saw he was now in the toils; that of his own accord he had walked into the net which had been so carefully spread for him; he glanced at the door, a furtive glance, but it did not escape the notice of the wary lawyer, who in fact was watching for it; he knew the desperate man would try to escape; the window was out of the question; it is true they all reached to the flooring of the room, and opened out on a balcony, but the balcony was twenty feet from the ground, the latter covered with a deep

bed of shingle; no one would be mad enough to attempt escape in that direction; a second glance at the door—a slight movement of the body told the lawyer his captive was ready to make a bolt; he looked up from the papers which were strewn on the table, and turning to Captain Percy, removing his spectacles as he spoke, said, in the same tone of voice he would have used if he had been asking him to take a chair—

“Pray do not trouble yourself to move; the men servants are all outside that door; and it is locked!”

Captain Percy's craven cowardly nature now asserted its right; his heart sank with fear; he saw before him all the horrors of long years spent in confinement and toil, perhaps to end only with his life; these Scotch people (and he cursed the whole race as the thought passed through his mind) were so united, they would be sure to band together in order to punish to the utmost, one who had outraged the decencies of life, broken the marriage vow, incarcerated his wife in a living tomb, as he had done. He cast in his mind how to escape, at any sacrifice, in any way; nothing too low, too mean, to which he would not stoop, so that he might be a free man again, free if even in hunger and rags. What! he who never of his own will remained an hour inside the house in his life, except to play cards or billiards, to be shut up within prison, or worse still, dock yard walls for life, even the thought was enough to drive him mad.

He had time to think it all over ; Mr. Seaton was filling up the warrant for his apprehension, a long printed paper, with here and there a name, or a line or two of writing, which with Seaton of Thurlow, was no every day work, at home he had a clerk who did such things for him ; it is true Peter Farquharson could have filled up the paper, ready for signature, in a few minutes, with him a pen was merely an elongation of his fingers, which he had rather use than not, but, occupied in arranging the papers, he did not think of offering to do it, and so Mr. Seaton toiled slowly on.

Captain Percy mentally swore great oaths at his own stupidity, in having thus thrown himself into the Lion's den, and Morrison, he cursed and ground his teeth as he thought of him, a lawyer by profession, surely *he* ought to have known better, and true to his revengeful nature, at the moment that he was himself on the edge of the pit, in the slough of despond, he was forming plans of vengeance against his companion in iniquity, who had helped him to the best of his ability and knowledge

A question put by Mr. Seaton to the lawyer, brought back the wretched man's thoughts to himself, and the danger he was in ; he knew he had no mercy to expect from these men ; they looked upon his punishment as less than he deserved ; the only one to whom he could turn with a ray of hope was Lady Gordon !—the one who within the hour he had insulted so grossly—whose money in the early

days of his marriage he had obtained by falsehood to squander on his vices,—whose beloved child he had neglected, tormented, goaded almost to madness, shut up in the hut of a savage, declared dead two years previous, she whom he hated as he hated everything good, and great, and noble,—yes, to her he must sue; her woman's nature was his only chance—he would abase himself in anyway—crawl at her feet in the dust—promise anything—so that he might escape the prison—the toil—the coarse fare he hated, and that even now in his dire extremity his sensual soul thought of; yes, this was his latest chance—

“I want to speak to Lady Gordon,” he almost gasped out, addressing Mr Farquharson.

“It is a pity,” replied the lawyer, “you did not say all you wanted to say while she was here; her Ladyship will hardly be inclined to renew the interview, which was not at all agreeable while it lasted.”

He could have felled the lawyer to the earth; his manner, more than his word, showed that to him, Bertram Percy was as much a prison bird, a condemned criminal, as he would be when he was led out to herd among his fellows in crime; he felt this to his heart's core, but he dared not resent it, his only hope lay in once more seeing Lady Gordon, being able to appeal to her for mercy—and this man could deny him the opportunity as usual he had recourse to subterfuge.

"I wish to say something to Lady Gordon that she will bitterly regret all her life long if she does not hear; once outside this house my lips are sealed forever."

Peter Farquharson looked hard in the man's face; he saw there the most intense fear, fear that could make him crawl among the worms of the dust, but he could read no other emotion; he remembered hearing of a third child of Margaret Gordon's, a baby who was reported dead, and a thought crossed his mind that perhaps this child was alive. and in the hut of some savage, as the mother had been; it could do no harm to mention his suspicions to her Ladyship, and he went into the inner drawing-room for that purpose.

Lady Gordon knew that this could not be the case; Miss St. Clare had repeated all she knew of the death and solitary grave of the little child, the only solace of her lonely mother's heart.

"No, he can have nothing to tell me I do not already know; yet let him come and say what he wishes me to hear; it will most likely be the last time we shall ever meet on this side of the grave."

It was so.

Admitted to Lady Gordon's presence, the poor wretch flung himself on his knees before her, praying in the most abject manner for mercy, conjuring her by all things she held dear and sacred, to save him from the terrible fate which hung over him, promising to swear the most binding oath that he would

never again enter Scotland, nay he would go to Australia, New Zealand, anywhere she chose to name; he was so poor he had not a shilling to buy bread, but he would work his passage across the ocean, change his name, work for his bread in a foreign land, and bless her forever, while power of speech was left him.

Lady Gordon held counsel with her own heart; she put away all her child's wrong, would not allow it obtrude on her thoughts for one moment; her soul went up to the footstool of her risen Lord, seeking grace to do His will, and the answer came, strong and clear as the hand writing on the wall in Babylon, "whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, that do ye also unto them."

Bertram Percy left the old house with a hundred pounds in his pocket, bound down by a solemn promise to leave Edinburgh by the train which went South at five o'clock, to proceed to Australia, and never again set foot on British ground.

We shall see how he fulfilled his oath!

Margaret Gordon and her brothers were in Liverpool, and here the latter proposed that they should stay for at least a day, that she might rest after the fatigue of her long voyage.

Tiny would by no means consent to this; she had reminiscences of Liverpool which were all too terrible to be renewed, even the kindness she had received there was from one who she dared not trust herself to think of; ever putting from her the painful

thought of what might have been, had Bertram Percy never crossed her path, or she herself exercised her unbiassed judgment, taking her standard by the law of right and wrong which the Heavenly Father has given to all.

She shuddered as she thought of the week of loneliness and misery she had spent in Liverpool, when Bertram Percy left her the evening of their arrival, as he said, "to take a walk before going to rest," and instead of returning as was his wont between three and five in the morning, the night and day passed, and six nights and days, and he came not; it is true the landlord of the hotel informed her each day that Captain Percy, with one or two other gentlemen, generally came there for dinner and supper, but her apartments he never came near.

She remembered also but too well that it was Hugh Seaton who at last found out her recreant husband, and brought him to his senses, that Major Seaton, informed by a letter from one of his brother officers of Captain Percy's conduct, and the life his neglected wife was leading, came from Scotland on purpose to ascertain for himself whether such a story could possibly be true; and having found it was even but too true, departed not until he had obtained a solemn promise from Captain Percy, on his word of honor as a gentleman, that such a thing should never occur again. *His* word of honor! the cur who placed no more value on his word or oath, than he did on a false coin.

And her memory went back but too vividly to an after time, and the words of bitter scorn, in which she was tauntingly told of Hugh's interference in her behalf.

No, a day of rest in Liverpool would be no rest for her, either for body or soul.

They were near their destination, in Scotland, close to Edinburgh.

Tiny's brow, which had been so clear for weeks back, ever since they left Montreal, was now clouded, and her spirit, which on ship board seemed to be regaining the elasticity of her girlhood, was now full of nervous unrest, and she asked herself over and over again the sad question, "how shall I ever enter the old house and walk in its grounds and gardens, see all the inanimate things that cannot feel, still there, and she who would have welcomed me with such intense delight, lying cold and still, never to look into my eyes or touch my hand again."

How often during that last day of their journey did she draw her veil over her face, lest her tearful eyes should betray the sorrow, which strive against it as she would, still asserted its right to be uppermost in her heart.

Her brothers noted the change, and knew the cause, but feared to tell her that her mother still lived, would be there to welcome her home; there in the railway cars the excitement might be too much, and they asked each other, "Why did we not tell her on shipboard? how could we have been so stupid? now we will be at home in half an hour, we must leave it alone."

And what of Captain Percy? did he keep his promise, his solemn oath? that he would leave Edinburgh within the hour, go to one of the Colonies, and never return to Scotland, all his life long—did he *mean* to keep that oath, offered with such humiliation—vowed so solemnly with hand clasped on the Holy Evangel? Perhaps he did, just at the moment his lips were uttering the words which were to make him a free man; he had such a horror of those closed walls, the terrible prison labor, that *freedom* anywhere, on any terms, was full of blessing, light and life.

He thought of the life of excitement the Indians lived, on their Pagan reserve; he dared not go to Canada; the man known as George Smith would certainly be recognized and seized there; he had had enough of prowling about in disguise and in the dark, the last week he was in Montreal, every quick footstep he heard behind him making his heart beat with fear, lest a heavy hand should be laid on his shoulder, and the words, "You are my prisoner," meet his ear; he would not risk this again; but there were Indians, and wild bush land, and buffalo, beyond the Rocky Mountains, and there he would go.

These thoughts passed through his mind while the Holy book was in his hand, as he laid it on the table, and recognized the hated volume in its loose cover of black leather he used to read from with such weariness, to please Lady Gordon, in the early days of his courtship of her daughter.

Had Lady Gordon consulted the two gentlemen who were in the house, the one her relation, the other her friend, her father's friend, she might have been induced to let the law take its course, but she acted on what she considered the law of her risen Lord.

Captain Percy was sent to the Depot of the Railway by Mr. Farquharson, James the old coachman driving him in a light dog-cart. They were in time for the train which was just starting, and James, who had been instructed to see him off, drew his attention to the whistle which sounded just as the vehicle arrived at the Station. Captain Percy raised his eyebrows, gave the man an insolent stare, and said in a haughty manner, as if a great liberty had been taken with him—

“Have you yet to learn to address your superiors only when it is necessary for their service?”

Every servant in Lady Gordon's house knew more of Captain Percy's low habits than she herself or her friends did. James also knew that were it not to get her son-in-law out of the way, he would not have been sent to drive him to the railway, with instructions to see him off; he cared little for offending him, and replied curtly.—

“I have yet to learn that you are my superior or the superior of any decent man; I was told to see you off by the train which goes South in a few minutes, and I shall do so if possible.”

"You were right to add "if possible," my man; it is not possible, as I am not sure by what train I shall go South, but you may now go back and tell Madam Gordon that if I leave Edinburgh to-night, I will go when, and by the conveyance I please."

He would have liked to tell the truth, perhaps for the first time in his life, and say that he had determined not to go South, but to wait for the seven o'clock train, by which, (he had gathered from the telegram Lady Gordon had received in his presence,) his wife was expected, and return that night to the old house with her, but the warrant for his apprehension was written out, a few minutes would suffice to place it in the hands of a detective; he must be careful for the next two hours; after that he hoped to have Tiny on his side, even as half an hour past he had her mother.

He jumped from the dog-cart, and in a few minutes, taking the direction of the train, was lost in the crowd; a man with the same slouched alpine hat as Captain Percy wore, jumped on the train just as it started; the coachman fancied he had seen his mistress' unworthy son-in-law safe off by the five o'clock train for the South.

Captain Percy went to an Hotel in the immediate vicinity of the station, ordered dinner, bought a box of cigars, and prepared to enjoy himself until seven o'clock.

Now that he had money, he would have preferred having a few weeks to enjoy himself, before settling

down to what he considered must be for some time at least, (until he had acquired a proper ascendancy over Tiny's mind) the humdrum of married life.

Having satisfied his appetite, and smoked his cigar, he stretched himself at full length on a sofa where contemplating the ceiling, he began to hold communion with himself on the stirring scene he had gone through in the last few hours.

"So," he soliloquized, "Madam Gordon would have packed me off to the back of the world, while she, the two young gentlemen and Miss Tiny, would enjoy themselves to the full on the fortune of the millionaire brother; not if I know it Madam, it seems you cheated the Sexton of his dues, but you won't cheat Bertram Percy. I wonder how she managed that? most likely some infamous trick to endeavor to cut me out of my rights. I was nearly forgetting my own little cubs, ungrateful man that I am, the dear lambs, who at the present moment constitute the best part of my stock in trade."

"Now I must go over my programme for seven o'clock; in the first place watch the arrival of the train—look carefully into each window of the first class car; having found the one which contains my fate, I must be directed by circumstances as to my conduct; in all likelihood one fond brother will go to find the carriage, which, of course, will be in waiting to convey the happy family to their mother's arms. Ha! ha!" laughed he, with a sarcastic grin, "she does not expect a fourth, and that fourth her dear son-in-law, who she fancied two hours before, she

had paid off for life with one hundred pounds, the niggardly old wretch ; but I forget my programme, —one brother gone to hail the carriage (doubtless a new and handsome covered carriage, not the dog-cart which was considered good enough for Bertram Percy,) the other of course departs to see after the luggage, for which the dog-cart is in waiting ; now is my time !”

“I seize the happy moment to enter the cars, I throw myself at Miss Tiny’s feet, beg for mercy, assail her with my poverty and hunger as I did her mother, assure her by all my hopes of Heaven, that the story of Abby’s marriage is a vile calumny, concocted to separate us and bring me to ruin, threaten to throw myself into the water of Leith—and come off victorious. On the return of the brothers they find the lovers reconciled ! end of part first.—”

“The old Jezebel need not flatter herself that Bertram Percy and lady will remain her visitors, not at all. Darling Tiny will be taught to require a house in London, for which Jezebel will fork out, with an occasional visit to Baden Baden and Homburg. Wont I bleed her freely ? yes, Sir, and amid the multiplicity of my own affairs, I must not forget specious pleasant Miss Abby ; I must visit New-York, to repay her in the first place for her trouble in stealing my money, and secondly, for the kindness she manifested in furnishing Jezebel with a hint of where her marriage took place ; it could have come through no other means ; wait for me, Miss Abby—you shall have your wages in full—I’ll”—

He started up—"Yes, that's the whistle—Now, Bertram Percy, your very best—all pleading first—only threats of carrying off the cubs, when nothing else will move."

The train had stopped—crowds came pouring out from every car—Captain Percy walked leisurely along the outside of the first class car—there were few passengers—he kept his hat slouched over his eyes—"Ha! there they are," he mentally exclaims, as he discovers Tiny's face at the window, trying to look into the darkness. He retreated into the shadow—he could see plainly into the compartment where the sons and daughter of Lady Gordon sat. His programme was begun—Sir Reginald rose and left the car by the door nearest to the baggage car, Robert went out among the carriages. The instant they were gone, Captain Percy hurried to the side of the train; it was in motion—there was something wrong; the conductor saw a man making towards the platform, and called with a voice of thunder "Off!" The man had surely lost his senses; he jumped for the platform—a great cry among the people—"A man under the wheels!"—"A man killed!"—

Reginald Gordon is there in a moment—he looks on the crushed limbs—the heaving convulsive body—the ghastly face writhing in death; he knows that face—he is recognized—a moment more, Bertram Percy is little else than a bleeding piece of clay!

"Come, Tiny, the carriage is waiting; old James driving as he did when we were all children."

"What accident was that, Reginald?"

"A man hurt; he was trying to jump on the platform of this carriage, while the cars were in motion; the conductor called to him, but he took no notice; people will be so reckless."

"Perhaps he was deaf, and could not hear."

"That is not likely; such things occur every day; people will come on and leave the cars when they are in motion, although they are constantly warned of the danger."

"Is he dead?"

"I believe so."

"Poor man, to be hurried into Eternity without a moment's warning, were any of his friends here?"

"No; he is a stranger, and I desired that his body might be cared for and buried at my expense; come away, Tiny, get in."

They are bowling along so fast the horses seem to fly.

"I was so occupied talking and thinking of that poor man, that I did not speak to James; he will open the carriage when we get out; he will be the first one I will speak to by way of making amends for my neglect."

They are within the gate, going up the drive; the old house ablaze with light.

"I am sure he will not be the first you will speak to," said her brother. "Look how the light streams from the open door out on the portico; look Tiny,

Mamma and the two children you are always talking of are on the lower step ; that must be Seaton of Thurlow, and I do declare, Peter Farquharson, with his head as grey as ever, I should have known him among a thousand, and Miss St. Clare and some one else—and of all others, Willie Hamilton !”

Sir Reginald was talking on unheeded ; Tiny was staring at her mother—in another moment she is in Lady Gordon’s arms ; she could scarce believe her senses—Oh ! it was such dear happiness, the one she thought it impossible she should ever, ever see again.

“ You see I am the first to welcome you, after all !”

A great dinner at the old house to welcome home two children, both of whom had been mourned as dead ; a feast of fat things, wine on the lees.

“ Who do you like best, Charlie ?” Tiny had been loading him with sweetmeats and toys brought from New-York on purpose.

“ Not you.”

“ Oh ! Charlie !”

“ No, I dont. I like grandmamma, and Leo, and my pretty Mamma up there,” and he pointed to the cabinet picture in the blue dress.

“ But this is your pretty Mamma, Charlie,” said Lady Gordon, putting her hand on Tiny’s shoulder.

“ That my pretty Mamma !” said the child in a contemptuous tone, looking at Tiny’s pale face with any thing but admiration in his eyes “ is’nt she in a

black frock and a white face ? and my mamma has a beautiful blue frock and red cheeks."

The child's words were remembered long after he had learned to call her mamma, and to love her dearly, and they taught her that she must put away the old life, with all its sad memories, if she would gain the love of those children, whose present was all sunshine.

Bertram Percy was carried to an hospital ; life was not totally extinct. He lived to see the early dawn of another day, lived until the tide went back, went out to sea—and then his poor unclothed soul went out on a wider sea, even the sea of Eternity that hath no bounds.

During the few hours he lived he was well cared for by Miss St. Clare and Marion, who were with him in the hospital until he died. It was then he made the confession which forms part of the narrative portion of this book. In his purse were found ninety-nine pounds in bills and some silver ; in his coat pocket two crushed letters both addressed to Miss St. Clare, the one signed Robert Morton, the other Marion Mitchell !

The money by Sir Reginald's orders was given to the hospital where he died ; the letters restored to their owner.

Letters were written to his friends in Westmoreland, informing them of the accident, and his body sent to them. His uncle, an upright honest man, one who had led a busy life himself, and therefore

hated all idlers, "incumbrances of the earth," as he called them, folded the letter which informed him of his nephew's death, laying it on the table, and placing his spectacles above it in his methodical way, said, speaking his thoughts aloud, as was frequently his habit. "So there is the end of a fellow who never in all his life won a penny, and had he lived to the age of Methuselah, never would." And putting on his hat, he hurried out to give orders for the proper reception of the body, the interment of which he desired might take place as soon after its arrival as decency would permit.

His sisters mourned over Bertram Percy, as sisters will do, let the object be ever so unworthy. His intense selfishness, which for years back, never ceased crying "give, give," his insatiable love of gambling and low company, of which they were well aware; his reckless extravagance, which made their pocket money as long as he could obtain it, melt like snow in the sunshine; his innate meanness, which during the short time the inheritance left him by his father lasted, would not permit him to present them with the smallest trinket, the cheapest bauble, but confined his presents to a camelia from his uncle's greenhouse, a bunch of grapes from the vinery—were all forgotten, buried in the dust; the few good qualities he possessed, the trifling kindnesses he had shown them, were remembered, talked of, and magnified.

One tender dark-eyed girl, who within the few

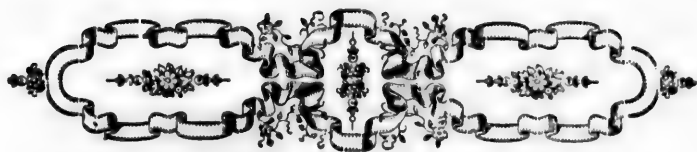
past weeks, in order to send him the money so adroitly appropriated by Abby, had given up a winter's residence with dear friends in Dresden, which she had long looked forward to as promising her a time of so much happiness, hung over his body, wild with grief, kissing his pale lips, and wetting his cold face with the great tears which fell down like rain.

"Bertram, dear, dear Bertram, my brother, mine own, would to God I had died for thee!"

Witnessing a scene like this, we shrink within ourselves in silent fear, as we ask the startling question, "Where is he? Where has the poor unclothed soul gone? He who went down to death in the midst of his sins, without as far as earth knows, one thought of repentance, one cry for mercy."

One thing we do know, God is more merciful than man; the dear Lord Christ came to die for sinners and the ungodly; the great All Father, who created us, and has borne with the sins and waywardness of poor human nature for six thousand years, loves with a stronger, because purer love, than sister's or mother's or wife's; He can send down His Holy Spirit now as on the day of Pentecost, in one moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and to this High and Mighty Lord, this great Redeemer, we are willing to leave all in humble trust, until faith shall be lost in sight.

Mrs. Percy was made aware of her husband's death by a railway accident, shortly after it occurred, but she never knew that the man who was killed the day of her arrival in Edinburgh, was Bertram Percy



CHAPTER XXX.

WHEN Mrs. Percy's arrival at Leith, I wished at once to return home, but both she and Lady Gordon were so anxious I should remain with them, that my departure, at their united and earnest entreaty, was delayed from day to day, until at last the calender warned me that if I wished to spend Christmas with "my own people," I must be gone.

Dearly as I loved Lady Gordon and Mrs. Percy both, the former the tried friend of years, one whose generosity had made me rich beyond my most sanguine expectations, the latter endearing herself more and more to me every day with her quiet loving ways, the consideration for others, the absence of self which marked all her actions, I longed to leave the old house at Leith, where I had spent so many quiet days.

All the time I was there, particularly after Mrs. Percy's arrival, I had such a terrible consciousness of the shadow which lay upon my name; I had expected to hear the history of my prison life and its cause talked of, discussed and explained. This to a certain extent was done, but all memory of Captain Percy's connection with it, seemed to have been

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HIGH STREET AND ST. GILES' CHURCH

buried in oblivion, the waters of Lethe to have passed over the whole story, as far as he was concerned !

It is true that after my arrival I was asked by Lady Gordon to repeat minutely everything which bore on that terrible episode of my life, and we talked it over and over again, but although I was presented to all her Ladyship's friends as "her dear friend who had found Tiny with so much toil and trouble," yet the story of George Smith's theft was never even alluded to ; It was wisest and best that it should be so, and I have come to look upon it with different eyes now, but then it filled every day, every hour with trouble ; I desired earnestly and expected to hear the story of my incarceration talked of and explained, George Smith identified with Captain Percy, my innocence made clear as the noon day, instead of which I found the subject wholly ignored.

I entirely overlooked the fact that Canada papers never came to Scotland, that if an account of my conviction, condemnation and subsequent acquittal had been read, no one would have ever dreamed that I was the Ruth St. Clare, whose name flourished there as being the victim of George Smith, and that telling my story to her guests, Lady Gordon would simply be disclosing the fact that the father of her grand-children was a thief. I understood the motive which kept her silent, and in after years I approved of it, but then with my heart pain all awake, the strong desire I had for the truth being held up

before the eyes of the world, it made me feel day and night as if I was half a culprit.

I went to bid good-bye to old Saunders Mitchell and his wife, no words were needed to tell the peace and happiness which Sandy's altered habits had brought to their humble fire-side. Sandy was now Mrs. Percy's coachman; his duties gave him almost constant employment in driving herself and her children about; he had thus no opportunity of renewing his acquaintance with the old companions who were his bane; he had no hereditary desire for strong drink, the habit was broken, he was a free man.

It was not until after my return from Canada I found out, that "poor lost Sandy," as she used to call him, was Marion's darling; she was the eldest of the family, Sandy the youngest, and she looked upon him as her own; her face which used to be so sad, that I often feared its influence on the children, was a smiling one now.

I bade goodbye to Lady Gordon and her household, with feelings anything but what they ought to have been; I fancied my good name tarnished, my life (in all that makes life lovely) blighted, and that, by a different line of conduct on Lady Gordon's part, this might have all been washed away; my nervous system had been terribly shattered, subsequently my mind had been left to dwell on its own thoughts, ever going round and round in the same circle, which, had a change not come, would have produced mental disease.

I began to feel as if I was to have the shadow taken from my life, the slur from my name, almost as soon as the hills of Edinburgh faded from my sight. And long ere the spire of Peterston church greeted my eyes, I was forming plans for surprising and delighting "the loving ones I loved the best," by walking in upon them in some old familiar way, knowing as I did that I was wholly unexpected.

The dear old town clock struck five as the cars arrived at the depot. The railway was an improvement since I had left Peterston, and I found it had brought several others in its train,—new houses, a thing almost unheard of in my time, more than one or two a year, a handsome new schoolhouse, a new bank. I saw and noted all in the dimly lighted streets, as I took my way to Sandy Hill Brae in the sharp air of the December night. How dear and familiar each small shop and humble dwelling looked, as I passed close by and tried to look through the curtainless windows, where the shutters had not yet been closed; on the mother and her children, each one of whom I could name; on the old woman who sold bread, and penny beer, and apples, and who now lived so lonely, since her only child, a son, married an Irish girl, and went away to live in his wife's land. There she was, the dear old body, her cap as white and neat as ever, sitting on a low stool beside the fire, her spectacles on, reading by the fire-light, the book I knew so well, and had seen her read from so often. I stood for a moment

irresolute, tempted to enter and slip the present I had long ago resolved should be her's into Granny Panton's hand, but a single thought of the indignation which would fill Janet's mind, to the exclusion, for the time, of any other feeling, when she came to find out that Miss St. Clare had gone into the "beer wifie's house before she cam hame to her ain folk," deterred me.

Up the brae, over the crisp frosty ground——past the pump I went——In Mr. Johnston's house I can see them stirring about, preparing tea in the lighted kitchen; a little further on, Miss Robertson had a friend with her, tea was on the table, and the best china cups, I knew them well; her maid (Janet's gossip) came to shut the shutters; I was evidently recognized; as I paused looking at the group inside, she turned round, and spoke to her mistress with a smile on her face, leaving the shutters half shut; I saw the mistress and visitor come to the window as I retreated.

Now I am close to our own kitchen window, stooping down, looking in, everything clean and shiny as usual, the black tea kettle on the bright fire, the steam rushing from the spout, I could almost hear it singing its song of home and welcome, the bright tea pot on one hob, the brass tea kettle on the other, Janet seated in front, toasting bread for tea.

I felt my heart beat almost audibly, as I looked at the old home picture I had known since my early girlhood.

I tapped gently on the window ; this was the way Janet's visitors were wont to announce themselves ; she adjusted the slice of toast adroitly in front of the fire, and then came to the window, opening it just enough to discover who was there, and what was wanted. I held up my finger to warn her, I wished that Grand-papa and Ella should not be made aware of my arrival ; she understood at once, and with a smiling pleased face, signed to me to go to the door,—she herself, with her careful habit, removing the slice of toast from the fire before ascending the kitchen staircase.

As she opened the door, she said, speaking to herself as if to account to some one inside for doing so,—“ I wonder what kind o' a night it is ? ”

“ Ye're welcome hame, Miss Ruth,” in a quiet under-tone.

“ Thank you, Janet,” replied I, in the same low accents, “ where are Grandpapa and Ella ? ”

Janet seized one hand of mine in both her own, and pulling me gently forward, said—

“ The Major is in the parlor, sittin' sleepin in his chair, and Miss Ella is up the stair doin' her hair. An how are ye, yoursel ? ” she continued, almost in the same breath, “ ye look gay bleached like, but maybe it's in the grey light.”

Grey light indeed ! the little hall lamp was lit, but true to her principle of saving, the light was so low as to deserve the name of grey.

"I wish to surprise them, Janet," said I, speaking softly as I had before done. "So if you'll take my cloak and hat, I'll sit at the table in my old place, until you bring up the tea; you can awake grandpapa, and call Ella down, before you bring in the candles."

"I'll jist do that," replied she, as she relieved me of my wraps, and opening the parlor door, softly signed for me to enter.

The room at first, even after the grey light of the hall, seemed darkness visible. Janet had what she called the after-dinner fire in the grate, which meant coals put on the top, which were not to be stirred, and thus would not burn, until the tea was on the table, so that it was rather difficult to distinguish objects at once.

By and bye, I began to see grandpapa asleep in his great leather chair, the side table, which, with the aid of old fashioned knife and spoon boxes, did duty as a side board, the old piano with its thin spinnit-like legs, the old fashioned mantel mirror, the gilded raven on the top, from whose bill hung a chain and ball, looking so poor and mean now, to what it used to do, when taught by Janet, I considered it one of those things, which like the thin-legged piano belonged of right to "the gentles," of which class of the aristocracy we of course formed a part, and that such an elegant piece of furniture was altogether unprocurable by common people.

By degrees I came to distinguish the family picture hanging above and extending the whole length of the

side table, representing my grandfather on one side, instructing three boys, my uncles (who all seemed about the same height with their father) in the use of the terrestrial globe, while on the other my grandmother appeared to be listening with delight to the performance of my mother on the thin legged piano, and my aunt Mabel, who accompanied her sister on a guitar, strung round her neck by a very loose broad blue ribbon, with a large conspicuous looking bow—a fine stag hound in the fore ground completed the picture, which until my residence in Edinburgh, I always considered a *chef-d'œuvre*; each familiar thing was slowly unfolding itself, the geraniums and rose trees in the window, the old crimson merino curtains all coming into sight one by one, when suddenly my grandfather stretched out his arms, uttered a “heigh, ho!” and rang the bell, the usual summons for tea.

Janet appeared, armed with tea-pot and steaming brass kettle, which she proceeded to put on the table.

“What has become of the candles, Janet? Have I slept long, Ella?” addressing me, as I sat opposite to him, but back from the fire place in the shadow.

“That’s no Miss Ella, Major; I’ll call Miss Ella down and bring the candles in a minute.”

“How do you do, Miss Galbraith?” said my grandfather, half rising and bowing as he spoke. “I did not recognize you, sitting as you are in the shadow, and indeed the whole room is dark; we shall see,” continued he, rising and taking the poker to stir the fire, “if we cannot throw a little light on

the subject, without waiting for Janet and the candles."

A hearty stir to the fire, breaking the coals, sent a flood of light into the room, while at the same moment Ella entered, followed by Janet, armed with a lighted candle in each hand, placed in the old-fashioned plated candle sticks, which formed part of our claim to be "gentles," and highly valued by Janet, as comprising a portion of the "family plate," the principal articles of which were of exactly the same intrinsic value as the old candlesticks.

"Ruthie!" from Ella, as she made two or three skips across the little parlor to where I sat.

"Ruth!" from Grandpapa, as he stood up, looking at me, unable to move from sheer amazement.

Ella kissed me, laughed, kissed me again, patting my cheek as if I was a baby, and turning round to look at the tea table, said—

"What a shame you did not write to tell us you were coming; we would have had something nice for tea."

"I like better to see you and Grandpapa, and be at home once more in this dear little parlor, than to have all the nice things in the world to eat; I am sick of nice things; I have not seen toast that looks so inviting as that since I left home."

Janet's good-humored face smiled all over as she heard me praise her toast, one of the things she prided herself upon, and would never allow another

make, because, as she always said, "A' body else burns't or drys't up like a stick, naebody kens how to mak it but mysel; an' the Major winna look at it gin it's nae right made; a' the warld kens' at the men folk, gentle and simple, need to be attended wi' their meat, an officer aboon a' wonna thole bad cookin."

It was now that my prison life was discussed, talked over and over until I was wearied of it; I had sent newspapers from Montreal as soon as I was able to think of anything, containing an account of the trial, and these, owing to the time which had elapsed, were obtained with a little difficulty; I sent them all to my Grandfather's care, requesting him to distribute them freely among our friends; I was feverishly anxious that all publicity should be given to it.

I had not read an account of the trial myself; when I looked at it, it seemed to rack my brain, and now when Ella showed me the paper they had kept for themselves, I found, to my surprise, what I might have guessed at, that Captain Percy's name was not there, nor the least allusion to him, the motive assigned for George Smith (who was described as a dissipated Englishman, supporting himself and wife by low gambling and shop theft) trying to fasten his crime upon me being merely his anxiety for his own safety, which his large robberies from the dry goods stores rendered necessary, and his singling me out because seeing I was a stranger, I would most likely have no one interested in me, and as an occupant of a board-

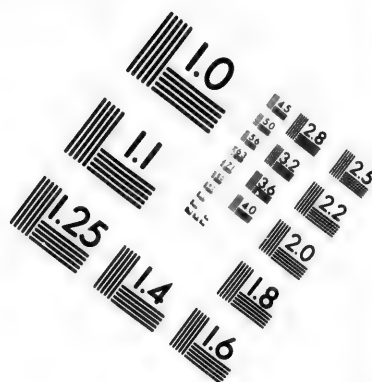
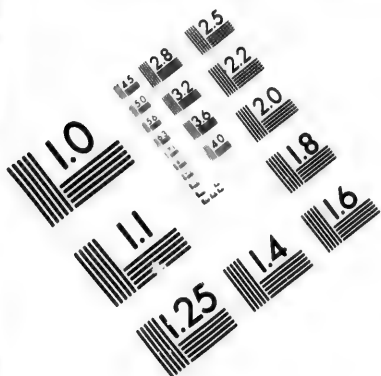
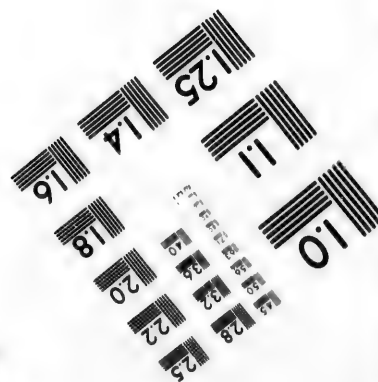
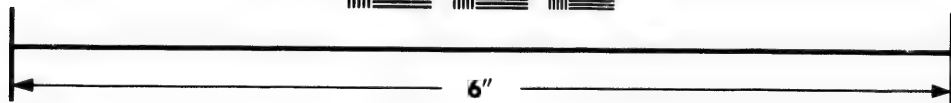
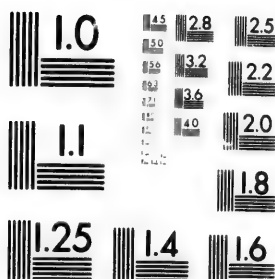


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ing house not far from his own, he would have more facilities in fixing the crime upon me.

I at once saw why Lady Gordon carefully avoided, when speaking to strangers of my terrible trial, any mention of her son-in-law's participation in it; it would have been simply associating his and of course his children's name with crime which he was not known to have had any hand in.

After my return to Edinburgh, and the ten thousand pounds given me by Lady Gordon, had been remitted to the Bank of Scotland in Peterston, in my name, I saw an announcement of the sale of Rossville Cottage, a pretty place in the suburb of the town, opposite to where we lived, which, from its elevated situation above the sea braes, commanded a view of the harbor and town, also all the ships that came in or went out to sea; the cottage itself a comfortable residence, surrounded by a small shrubbery, with a garden and orchard.

I had written to my grandfather to purchase it for me, which had been done at the low price of fifteen hundred pounds, I of course intending it as a home for us all.

However, on the first mention I made of my wish that we should remove to the cottage, I saw it would not do; grandpapa was wedded to the old place, to which he had brought his wife as a bride, and from which he had carried her out to lay her in the green churchyard, and where, as he said, his boys went out from, when they wandered away, each to seek his

fortune in a distant land. "And when they come back," said the old man, "if I am alive they will find me here, and in dreams when the dead come to see the quick Isabel Leslie will always come to the cottage on the Sandy Hill brae; she would never go to Rossville."

Ella, too, clung to the little place where she was born, with its few yards of garden ground, where she played away her merry childhood.

Even Janet put her veto against what she called, "such an unco like thing as a family who had lived a' their lives lang in respectability and gentility and comfort, wi' everything they could wish or want," (save the mark) "to gang aff to anither end o' the toun whar they didna ken ony o' the neighbors; deed, for that matter," she continued, "I dinna ken gin there be ony neighbors; its saxteen years sin' I was that gate wi' Miss Ella in my arms; ae day' at I gaed oot to gi' her an airin', an than, the nearest neighbor was the folk at Painted Effey, an' officers an their leddys dinna mak neighbors o' folk' at taks in washin."

It was a disappointment to me, I expected to have made such a pretty and happy home for us all. To me my grandfather's cottage which before I went to Lady Gordon's large house, seemed all that was necessary, now appeared of the smallest dimensions, but there was no help for it, so I had to give in with a good grace, and by degrees I coaxed Janet to allow me go to the extravagance of new carpets, and have the chairs and sofas re-covered, and one morning Ella almost

wept for joy at finding herself the possessor of a new Broadwood, with as she expressed it, "such beautiful tones that it might almost be made to play alone."

I found that my ten thousand pounds had suddenly endowed me with qualities that entitled me to be visited by those who formerly considered themselves gracious if they only bowed when we met; I had so many invitations during the winter, that if I had only accepted the one half I must have spent my time doing little else.

The fear I had of being avoided as one under the ban of society, only to be tolerated, was all gone; people talked with me, asking questions regarding my prison life, indignantly commenting on a law that could by any possibility make the innocent suffer for the guilty, in a way that convinced me more than anything else could have done, that not a breath of suspicion attached to myself.

My prison life had done no more ill to my outward life than in making the half of my brown hair grey, and for the brown hair, it gave me a heart full of untold sympathy with those who are sick and in prison, an earnest desire to help them, an inclination to believe the account they themselves gave of their sins and sorrows.

To my inward life, that which we all live apart, that which our very nearest cannot share, any more than they can go with us on our journey through the valley of the shadow, it had given dreams full of a wild fear, when I would wake up to thank God I

was in my little bed in my Scottish home ; days when in the midst of joy and laughter, serious conversation or lonely meditation, a handsome dark face would come up from the store house of my memory, and for one instant look into my eyes, telling all too plainly of the life of protection, trust, and love I had lost, and pointing down the long road I had to travel alone !

My dear old grandfather, in a few years, all too soon for me, would rise from his feeble body, and with quick and joyful steps go to meet his loved ones, who had gone so long before to the spirit home. Ella was too sweet, too loving to remain with me always ; I would not have it so if I could ; I hoped to see the time when some good man's earnest eyes would look upon her face with love and praise too deep for words ; when children would rise up and call her blessed, and then for me the long way down the road would be so lonely, I could see myself walking there with clasped hands and bowed down head.

There were no stones, or thorns there to hurt my feet or make my temples bleed, no hand to smite, no sharp voice to reprove, but the road was long and so lonely, and my heart was yearning for the glance of an eye I knew, the touch of a hand that was far away.

I had been a year and half at home. It was April, with its sudden gleams of sunshine coming amid soft showers, making the forest trees spread out their

fresh young green leaves, and the voyager birds had all come home from the South, and glad to be back again to the old nest and shady nooks they had left, were singing their sweet spring songs.

The tenth was Ella's marriage-day; she was to marry a young lawyer we all liked, John Galbraith, brother of the Miss Galbraith grandpapa mistook me for the night I came home.

I gave Ella Rossville cottage and two thousand pounds as her portion; she would in the end have all I had, but I did not think it best that her young husband should know this, and so have one motive less to exert himself; he was young and talented, I hoped to see him yet at the head of his profession, indifferent to the money of others which he could so easily win himself.

In the end of March our clergyman was struck by paralysis; his pulpit had for the two Sundays preceding the day set for Ella's marriage, been supplied by probationers, young men who could not perform the marriage ceremony, and who neither grandpapa nor I would have chosen for such a purpose, if they could.

Grandpapa had written to a friend of his, the clergyman of a neighboring parish, to come to us in this emergency; it was now the ninth, and his letter was still unanswered.

I was beginning to be very uneasy on the subject, and to fear that the marriage must be postponed; not one of us would have liked this; Janet declaring that it was such ill luck to put off a marriage after

the day had been so long fixed, and was so near at hand, that it would be better to put it off altogether; when the marriage was put off on account of the minister, one of the newly married pair would be sure to die ere the year was out.

Fate willed it otherwise. On the afternoon of the ninth, grandpapa came home, saying Mr. Mill, our own minister, had found a substitute for himself, in the person of a clergyman who had arrived at the hotel in the morning; He came just to see the place, and had been to visit him as the clergyman of the town; Mr. Mill asked him to perform the ceremony to which he willingly agreed.

Grandpapa called to see Mr. Mill while the clergyman was there, was introduced to the stranger, and his mind set at ease on the subject of his grandchild's marriage.

A beautiful bride Ella looked in her simple soft dress of white silk; she was to be married on her nineteenth birthday, too young for a wife; I would fain have kept her some years yet to myself, but I was overruled, the more easily as I felt my objection was partly at least a selfish one.

I dressed her myself, put on her bridal wreath and veil, then gave her to grandpapa, who took her away to give her to another!

I had watched over her all those nineteen years; it was for her I had left my home, and all the long four years we were parted, I prayed for her night and morn, and solaced myself that when the time

was over we would live many years together, and now she was gone !

I watched her with beating heart and eyes full of unbidden tears which would not be repressed ; as she walked on, her white gloved hand leaning on Grandpapa's arm, her veil like a cloud falling over the soft folds of her dress, along the little hall, down the staircase, I looked until I saw her enter the drawing room, where the bridal guests and the bridegroom waited the coming of the bride.

I felt as if my heart was breaking ; I had taken my first steps down the long lonely road !

There was no time for dreaming ; I dried my eyes as hastily as I could, and followed her down stairs, into the drawing room.

Miss Robertson and Mrs. Massie, a distant relative of our own, had installed themselves mistresses of ceremony.

Mr. Galbraith's two sisters were to be bridesmaids, and had waited for Ella in a little room opposite the drawing room door, and entering a second or two after the others, I slipped unnoticed to the other end of the room, and seated myself behind the guests, who were now all standing round Ella.

I knew the clergyman was in the group ; Janet came upstairs to announce his arrival before I had finished dressing Ella, sore and pre-occupied as my heart was, I looked up that I might see what like he was, as if that would have any effect on the

destiny of her who was about to lay aside, perhaps forever, "her maiden gladness for a name and a ring"

I succeeded so far. I saw a head above the others, with dark brown hair, but the face was turned the other way.

"Let us pray!" The voice which uttered these words and then waited for a second or two, that those around might compose both mind and body for the solemn act, thrilled through my every nerve; it was so like one I knew, one that spoke thus to people three thousand miles away, one I was so sure I would never hear again, it made me feel as if I had fallen into a cold icy sea.

The clergyman spoke again, in earnest words of supplication. I could not distinguish one word, knew not their import, but the tone and cadence, the habit of stopping at the end of each supplication for a second, were the same as I knew and had listened to so far away.

"They whom God hath joined, let no man put asunder!"

The solemn words fell like ice upon my heart; there was no Ella St. Clare now; she had passed from among us, she had for life and death another home, and bore another name.

My heart was exceeding sorrowful; I put both my hands on my face, and bowed down my head, and wept selfish tears; I was walking down the dark lonely road.

A hand touched my own, drew it away from my face ; some one was bending over me—

“ Ruth ! ”

I opened my eyes to see the dark handsome face of John Denham leaning over mine !

A moment more I was clasped in Ella's arms, her face on my cheek.

What made me feel so happy as I bade Ella good-bye, kissing her after she had entered the carriage which was to bring her part of the way to Edinburgh on her marriage jaunt ? was it because her sweet young face was radiant with joy ?

Yes, that was certainly one reason.

Ere many weeks were over, old Mr. Mill was dead, and Mr. Denham had accepted a call to the charge thus vacant, and when May came round again, John Denham went to attend the general assembly in Edinburgh, and I, (I had not walked far down that road I feared so much) I went to Edinburgh with Mr. Denham as his bride !

Lady Gordon would insist upon our living with her during the time we had to spend on our visit, and I for my part was very pleased to do so ; it was like home to me living in the old house, and my own heart full of rest and happiness, so fond and proud of my handsome talented husband, whose praise was in all the churches, made it a very different home to what it had been during the few last weeks I lived there.

How our own feelings and frames change the

aspect of all nature ; our hearts are oppressed with anxiety and care ; the house is cold and cheerless ; the trees sigh with a mournful cadence ; the song of the birds overhead is monotony and weariness.

A friend or a letter brings us good news ; the evil we feared has passed away ; good fortune comes in its stead ; the house is full of sunshine ; the shadow is gone ; the wind stirs the green boughs and soft leaves with a pleased twitter ; the birds sing with such sweet melody ; we listen entranced !

I went to the sitting of the assembly several times, and heard my husband speak with eloquence and power. I saw that he was listened to as few men of his age are, that old men grasped his hand as they do to their equals in knowledge. I heard his counsel listened to with respect, his suggestions deliberated on, his resolutions adopted ! My heart was quiet and hushed with happiness. Who was I, that this great good should happen unto me ? I the homely girl, no longer young, who at twelve years old, those who loved her best called "the old maid," what attraction could I have had for this handsome man, who in all things stood as a king among his peers ?

There was but one solution to the mystery, and doubling my veil over my face, lest others should see the big tears of gratitude which rose from my heart and would have way, I said, in my soul, "God has been very good to me."

Mrs. Percy was at Rockgirtisle Castle ; there was to be a great family gathering to celebrate Sir Reginald's

birthday ; Mr. Denham and I were asked to accompany Lady Gordon thither ; the sittings of the assembly were over ; my husband's business in Edinburgh done, and he at once consented that we should go.

Mrs. Percy had put off her mourning, and looked like a vision of beauty in her white muslin dress, yet there was an unrest in her eye which I did not like, and which told me there was something wanting to her happiness.

One afternoon the gentlemen had gone to see an eagle's eerie, which Brown had found out some days previous in a mountain crag overlooking the sea ; Mrs. Percy and myself had both declined to accompany the party of ladies who were to go as near the spot as the carriages could approach.

I had been writing for an hour in my own room. I had written to both grandpapa and Ella, and with a new volume my husband had purchased for me in Edinburgh, I sought a pleasant little parlor, which, with its balconied window, full of flowers, overlooked the eastern lawn.

I threw myself on a sofa occupying a curtained recess near the balcony, the fresh perfumed air from which came softly through the lace curtains, making it one of the most delightful retreats for repose or study.

I had been reading for some time, and was deeply interested in my book, when Mrs. Percy entered, carrying a book in her hand, and sat down on a low fauteuil out on the balcony. After her entrance I

did not think of her until I heard a deep sigh, and the words "a hard destiny," uttered in a voice which seemed full of emotion. I looked up in the direction of the balcony where Mrs. Percy sat; she was bending over a little occasional table placed beside the fauteuil I had seen her take as she entered; she had something in her hand which seemed very like a *carte de visite*.

She was holding it in one hand, with the other she supported her head; her hair hung over her hand, coming between her face and my sight, so that I could not see how she looked; she lifted the *carte* to her lips; I of course could not see the face on the *visite*, but the maker's stamp was a large one, and I distinctly read "Notman, Montreal," in large letters round the stamp.

I had seen a *carte* of Captain Percy, with a stamp exactly similar, in the possession of Abigail Smith, and I had also seen the justly enraged woman spit on the pictured face, tear it in pieces and burn it at the ship lamp; could it be possible that this which I now looked upon, was a duplicate of that I had seen destroyed on board ship? was it possible, that after all she had suffered, Mrs. Percy could still love the worthless wretch she had called husband? love his memory, so as to induce her to sigh over and kiss his photograph?

I tried to think of all I had heard her say with regard to her husband, and felt rather startled, as I found it impossible to bring to my recollection one unkind word of any kind which she had spoken on the subject!

They have an old saying in England

"A woman, a hound, and a walnut tree,
The more you lash them, the better they be!"

Could human nature be constituted like this? Mrs. Percy's mind and heart fell to zero in my esteem. As I looked at her and thought of the paradox her mind and heart must be, poor Abigail Smith, with her honest indignation against the bigamist and thief, was to my mind the nobler woman of the two.

Some subtle link, some hidden chord in my memory, brought me for an instant back to the stately man with his handsome face and large heart I had seen bending over Mrs. Percy's picture in the midnight, years ago when we all thought Lady Gordon lay dead in the house, and I felt almost a loathing towards the woman who could slight the love of the handsome, good and brave, and cling with such tenacity to the memory of one who lacked each quality of mind and body Hugh Seaton possessed.

While I still looked, she placed the *visite* in a white envelope, and laid it between the leaves of her book. At this moment, a loud cry of sharp pain came from the lawn; it was Leonora's voice; in a second Mrs. Percy was running down the balcony staircase which led to the lawn.

In the hurry of running to her child, she had left the book containing the photograph on the table, inside the balcony. I went to the balcony, and sitting down on the seat Mrs. Percy had just left,

opened the book, strongly inclined to tear the photograph it contained in pieces.

The envelope was in my hand, and I asked the question, if I dared trust myself to look at it? If I destroyed it, the owner would certainly make inquiries as to what had become of it. I would be obliged to confess myself the culprit, if only to save Lady Gordon, who I knew Mrs. Percy would at once suspect.

The wind stirring a tree which leaned entirely over the balcony, moved one of the lighter branches, so that it touched my arm. I started at the touch, and the envelope fell from my hand to the ground, two photographs falling from the open envelope, one of which a view of McGill College Montreal, fell with the picture upside, the other with the face on the floor, the stamp, the name, exactly as I had seen on the one shewn me by Abigail Smith. I put my foot upon it, pressing the face to the earth.

I am not naturally of a wicked disposition, and I fancy this mark of contempt, satisfied my desire of revenge. Perhaps it was so; perhaps my guardian angel whispered, the man was dead! at all events I felt my cheek burn with shame, as I raised my foot from the senseless piece of cardboard.

I felt humbled in the most humiliating way, in my own opinion, and stooping down, I carefully lifted up both cards and envelope, that I might replace them in the book; in lifting it, of course the photograph presented itself.

It was Hugh Seaton's pictured eyes that looked in my face !

The reaction from the painful feelings which had disturbed my mind for the last quarter of an hour, to the pleasant anticipations the discovery I had just made, gave rise to, made my heart beat with accelerated pace, as I replaced the photographs and envelope in the little volume which I now saw was a beautifully illustrated copy of Paul and Virginia, on the fly leaf of which was written "From Hugh Seaton to little Tiny," the date fourteen years previous.

On the second of the following December, while sitting at breakfast, I received a large parcel which was sent me by post, packed up in satin paper tied with white satin ribbon, and perfumed most unmistakeably with the bridal rose.

It contained bridal favors and cards. The names engraved thereon were "Colonel Seaton," "Mrs. Hugh Seaton." On the corner of the lady's card was her maiden name, "Margaret Gordon."

I sat for some minutes with the snow white missive in my hand, looking on them in a sort of retrospective dream, and my thoughts went back to the first time I saw Margaret Gordon, lying on a pauper's bed among strangers who knew not her name, could not speak her tongue, tended by them for the love of God ; and then my mind went back to the terrible time she herself told me of, when she sat in her loneliness in the Indian's hut, looking out on her child's grave, a small blue bottle in her hand,

"tempted of the Devil;" and my soul rose in praise to the Unseen Father, who, in all her woe and wandering had hedged her in by His love and power, and I involuntarily exclaimed.

"He hath indeed taken thee from the fearful pit and the miry clay."

"The lines have fallen unto thee in pleasant places."

THE END.